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Modern Premillennialism and the Christian Hope

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By

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THE LIFE OF JESUS
NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY
THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS
A WORKING FAITH

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TO MY FATHER
FAITHFUL MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL
OF JESUS CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most aggressive campaigns in religious propaganda is being carried on to-day in behalf of the premillennial doctrine. Outside of certain circles, however, this fact is little appreciated and very little attention has been paid to the movement as a whole. Most people think of it vaguely as a curious teaching about the end of the world. The intellectual leadership of the church always has been opposed as a whole to this doctrine, and the tendency is to regard this teaching as hardly worthy of serious discussion. Still others have avoided the question because they are averse to religious controversy. A deeper reason for indifference may be the fact that the church, occupied with practical affairs, has lost the realization that its supreme concern is with its message of truth, and that its practical life will be shaped by the great ideals that lie back of it. The result in any case has been that the flood of Adventist writings has been met by very little effort on the other side either by way of meeting error or of constructive treatment of the important questions involved.

The last fifty years have brought a new situation in the development of a premillennial propaganda that is undenominational and yet organized and aggressive, at times almost tending to become a church within our churches. Previous to this time systematic work in spreading this teaching was limited to special church organizations like the Plymouth Brethren and the Seventh-Day Adventists. More recent Adventist organizations have

been added to these, some of them with very pronounced doctrinal peculiarities like Dowie's Zionism and Millennial Dawnism. The latter especially, now calling itself the International Bible Students' Association, has distributed enormous quantities of literature. But these groups are usually clearly distinguished and more easily met. It is the undenominational propaganda that is affecting the churches much more deeply. It has organization. It commands in some cases very large funds. It is served by various educational institutions and has a number of religious publications as its organs. Of one volume it is stated that nearly a half million copies have been circulated, and that it is being sent gratuitously to ministers, missionaries, and theological students. It is very aggressive in its temper. Despite the fact that the historic creeds either directly oppose it or virtually exclude it, and that the accredited religious teachers in college and seminary are almost a unit against it, this modern movement makes a strong assumption of orthodoxy and is constantly attacking as heretics those who disagree. Of late years it is becoming increasingly a rallying point for various reactionary elements, appealing especially to those who stand for the older thoroughgoing Calvinism and for the ideas of literal inspiration and verbal infallibility.

In the last few years the importance of meeting this movement has been increasingly felt. We are realizing that in this thoroughgoing modern premillennialism we are dealing not simply with the zealous advocacy of an isolated doctrine but with a whole system of theology. We have here an interpretation of Christianity which would rule out other conceptions. Further, it is directly

and practically significant for our conception of the church and its work. For the heart of this teaching is its doctrine of world salvation, and the conclusions of that doctrine cut the ground out from under the enterprises to which the church is committed to-day. That many followers of this movement may not realize this does not change the logic of the situation, and the following pages show that the leaders are aware of these consequences. In addition, there should be noted the experience of many pastors who have found in this propaganda a disturbing and divisive influence in their churches.

This volume concerns itself primarily with the premillennialism represented in this undenominational movement. In Part II an analysis and criticism of this teaching is given. There are, of course, many forms of millennial doctrine. To discuss the peculiar vagaries of each of these would be impossible and is not necessary. The important matter is not to consider the details of doctrine but to understand the underlying principles of apocalypticism that appear in these different forms, and such fundamental errors as that of the conception and use of the Bible which is common to all. By centering the discussion, however, upon one of these movements, and this the one that is most closely concerning the church just now, it is possible to make the discussion definite and to cite authorities in support of the interpretation that is given.

It will be observed that in the criticism of this modern premillennialism full citations and references are given in support of each position. Individual adherents of this doctrine may repudiate one conclusion or another;

the important fact is that this is the teaching which is being set forth by those most active in the movement and generally recognized as its spokesmen. While the writer has read scores of premillennial works, the sources for this exposition of modern premillennialism are mainly the following: the reports of the three principal "prophetic conferences," the writings of men connected with these conferences and with the Moody and Los Angeles Bible Institutes, the works of men like Blackstone, Gaebelein, Haldeman, and Silver, which are commended by these writers, and a few older authorities like J. H. Brookes and Nathanael West.

The purpose of the author throughout has been practical: the desire to further a true and spiritual faith by a right interpretation of Christianity, to serve the church by making clear her hope and her task, and to give aid to hundreds of pastors whom he has addressed on these themes and who have asked repeatedly for such assistance in their work. In carrying out this purpose, however, he could not limit himself to the mere exposition and criticism of premillennialism. It seemed just as important that a constructive statement of this Christian hope of the Kingdom should be set forth to accompany this criticism. Protestant Christianity is entering upon the greatest forward movement which the organized church ever has undertaken. The weakest point in that movement is the place where Protestantism should be strongest, and that is in the clear setting forth of the faith that underlies this effort. For Protestantism is not an institution or a dogma; it is first of all an appeal to mind and conscience through the gospel committed to us. What is this kingdom whose coming is promised?

How are men to work with God, and how will God work through men? We are having plenty of exhortation and of organization; we need a new emphasis on the prophetic, preaching, teaching function. No great religious movement ever has had permanent power that did not rest back upon great truths clearly apprehended.

The first part of this volume is given to a historical sketch of the development of the hope of a better world from the time of the prophets onward. Such a study is necessary, first of all, for the understanding of premillennialism, whose roots lie back in Jewish apocalypticism. It is just as necessary in order to an adequate statement of a truer doctrine. Only such a historical study can show us how to distinguish between the changing forms in which the hope of a coming kingdom of God has been held and that underlying and abiding faith in the goodness of God and its final triumph. Those who are interested primarily in the exposition and criticism of premillennialism can turn directly to Part II, but even these should at least read the chapter on Jewish apocalypticism.

A word may be added as to the attitude of the writer toward those whose position he here criticizes. The writer has no desire for religious controversy and no least inclination to deny others their full right to interpret Christianity as they understand it. He believes that the bounds of Christian fellowship should be large enough to include men with such differences of opinion. He would recognize to the full the earnest life and devoted Christian service of men who hold this position. But all this does not relieve us of the responsibility of inquiring whether we have here a true interpretation of Chris-

tianity, and what its significance would be for the Christian Church. One does not need to be either a dogmatist or a heresy-hunter to realize how profoundly the life of man is determined by the truths which he holds. If this teaching of modern chiliasm be true, then a revolution is in order in the aims and plans to which our churches are committed and which we are using as the rallying call for a new crusade. If it is not true, then it is of the greatest importance that the character and consequences of this doctrine be pointed out. That is what is here undertaken.

Most of the discussion of premillennialism, forming Part II, appeared in the last three issues of the Biblical World for 1919. At the close of this volume will be found a brief bibliography designed not for the scholar but for the pastor who wishes to study for himself the matters here treated.

PART I

THE HOPE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN HISTORY

CHAPTER I

THE KINGDOM HOPE IN ISRAEL

The Place of Hope in Religion

Three elements enter in to form the life of all religion. On the lowest as on the highest plane, every religion has in it a faith, a task, a hope. In all religion there is first a faith, a conviction as to some higher Power upon whom man is dependent and from whom he may expect help. There is, in the second place, a sense of duty, the thought of some task or obligation, whether of outward deed or inward spirit, which a man owes to this Being. But the burning heart of all religion is the element of hope. It is this that makes God no mere theory but a living need. It is this that drives to service and sacrifice. It is this assurance of what he expects from his God that has enabled man through the long centuries to face the world that contradicted his faith and to bear all its ills. Nothing reveals more quickly the character of a religion than the hope that it holds out to men, for it is in this hope that the widest differences occur.

In the Christian faith this hope takes a threefold form, namely, the hope of individual salvation, the hope of a new world or a kingdom of God on earth, and the hope of a heavenly kingdom beyond. Premillennialism has to do with the thought of the kingdom of God upon earth, and our study is concerned primarily with this hope. This hope as it appears in Christianity to-day has a long history behind it. Our study of this history must be very brief, but it is necessary for two reasons,

First, it will help us to understand modern premillennialism, to do justice to its truth, to discern its weakness, and to discover how its various ideas have been united in this manner. Second, it will help us to form our own doctrine. The roots of Christianity are in the past. It is no mere mechanical reproduction of ideas once held, but it belongs to a living succession of faith that goes back to the Old Testament, and its inspiration and its confidence for the future come directly from Jesus Christ. Further, the Christian hope as it is held to-day has been profoundly affected by the experience of the church in these nineteen centuries and by the thinking of Christian men turned to these themes.

The Kingdom Hope and Its Source

Of the three aspects of the religious hope mentioned above—the individual hope, the social hope, and the hope of the future life—it is the second with which Israel was concerned. Though the phrase itself is one that belongs rather to Jewish apocalypticism and the New Testament, yet on the whole the Old Testament hope may best be characterized as the hope of the kingdom of God. It has often been called the Messianic hope, but the idea of the Messianic King is only one element in this hope, and the hope itself is often expressed without reference to the Messiah. One idea is always present, however—the thought of a coming rule of Jehovah which is to make the new day for men. And this is the meaning of the kingdom of God as used here; it is the rule of God as expressed in the life of men.

The source of this hope is not far to seek. It did not lie in a vague optimism, or a general desire for better

things, or some dream of a golden age transferred from the past to the future. It needs a deeper rootage than this to account for a hope that persisted century after century and flourished only the more as the storms of national adversity beat upon it. Two facts explain the presence of this hope. One is Israel's faith in Jehovah, her belief in the power and goodness of this her God. The other is the fact of evil that seemed to deny this faith. In one sense Jehovah's kingdom was already present:

"For the kingdom is Jehovah's;
And he is the ruler over the nations" (Psa. 22. 28).

In language lofty and beautiful the great prophet of the exile shows us Jehovah as creator of the heavens and the earth, as ruler of nature and history (Isa. 40 and other passages). But in another sense the rule of Jehovah is yet to come. Is there not evil in the world? Is not Israel oppressed? The answer to this was found in Israel's hope: there is coming a new age, in which iniquity is to be overthrown and evil done away, in which Jehovah alone shall rule. That age is to be brought in by a Day of Judgment, a day of Jehovah in which his power will be manifested. The kingdom hope is thus the answer of faith to the problem of evil. It faces the old question, How can I believe in a good God when evil holds sway in the world? It answers that question by declaring that the overthrow of evil and the full rule of Jehovah are to come.

Causes for Differences in Form of Hope

Such was the faith that was common to Israel, the hope of a coming rule of Jehovah which should bring

deliverance. When we turn to the Old Testament, however, we find large differences in the way in which this hope is held. There is to be a judgment on evil, but who is to suffer? Is it Israel's enemies or evil wherever found? What shall the new day bring and how shall it come? And to whom shall its blessings extend? Is Jehovah's purpose for Israel alone or for the nations too? The answers to these questions show no uniform doctrine of the kingdom into which all parts of the Old Testament can be fitted.

So far as these differences are important, they can be traced back mainly to two sources. Of these the more important is the difference in the conception of God, for what men expect from God always depends upon what they think of God. This is seen very clearly in the contrast between the teaching of Amos and the popular faith of his time. For the people Jehovah was first and last Israel's God, with no higher interest or obligation than the care of his people. There were, of course, duties on their part, the bringing of tithes and sacrifices and other offerings, but the bond that joined them was a natural and necessary one. The day of Jehovah, therefore, meant the destruction of Israel's enemies and her own triumph and prosperity. For Amos the day of Jehovah had a very different meaning; "It is darkness and not light," he declares. Its punishment was to fall upon Syria and Philistia and Moab and Edom, but upon Judah and Israel as well. It was not that Jehovah was not Israel's God, and in a special manner. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," he declares. The whole difference lies in the prophet's view of God. It is not merely that Amos has

a larger vision of Jehovah's power, that he is for him God of all nature and all history. More important is it that he is, first of all, for Amos the God of righteousness. He has not been without regard for other peoples, even Israel's enemies, the Syrians and Philistines (9. 7). But toward Israel, as toward them, the first rule of his action is righteousness. No natural and necessary tie binds him to Israel, no sacrifices can determine his attitude. If he has known them above other peoples, that simply means that their sins will be the more surely punished. Amos' doctrine of the future is fixed by his idea of God: the day of Jehovah is to be a day of punishment for all nations for their evil, and not least for Israel.

Changed conditions are the second source of differences in the form in which the kingdom hope is expressed in the Old Testament. The prophets were not men who framed abstract doctrines or programs for a remote future. They were preachers to their day. Naturally, they dealt with the future, alike in the matter of threat as of promise, but the future always was viewed in relation to the day in which they lived. Their thought of deliverance was related to the evils from which they suffered; the idea of punishment was similarly connected with iniquity which they observed. It is for this reason that the exile marks a turning point. In the earlier period the blow of overwhelming national defeat had not fallen. Israel was careless, sinful, unrepentant, and so the note of an Amos, for example, is that of an almost unrelieved doom. Contrast with this the message of Isaiah 40; the punishment has fallen, and now it is a word of comfort and encouragement that comes. For the same reason, at least in part, the earlier prophets

speak more of the judgment on Israel, the later of the judgment on the nations.

To these two sources of difference a third consideration must be joined, and that is the distinction between the moral and spiritual content of the prophet's message and the form in which it is expressed. Literalism and intellectualism shut the door effectually to a true understanding of these men. These writings bring us neither hard-and-fast dogma nor the authority of the latter. What is essential in them is the great faith which they express, the assurance that evil will be judged and destroyed, that Jehovah will rule, and that his kingdom will bring every blessing. The form in which this hope is expressed is secondary. Further, the form in which the faith is set forth is that of picture and poetry. Religious thought at its highest has more of poetry than of logic to it. It does not reason and expound; it sees, and its vision is clothed in concrete imagery. That is peculiarly true of the Oriental mind. Many of the prophetic writings should be printed in poetic form, as are the Psalms in the Revised Version. Yet even the Psalms have not been safe from those who "fashion a creed out of poetic imagery," and see in the Bible a textbook of theology each word of which is to be weighed for doctrine. These men, for example, had a vision of coming blessing and they exhausted every image to express its splendor. They expected too that nature itself would be changed in that day, but a peddling literalism or a concern for logical consistency was last in their thought. In one place we read, for example, that in the coming reign of Jehovah "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the

sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days" (Isa. 30. 26). And then we are told, in a picture of wonderful suggestiveness which we find again in Revelation, that in that day there shall be neither sun nor moon, "but Jehovah will be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isa. 60. 19). What the prophet seeks to express is perfectly clear, and the discerning reader is as little troubled by the surface contradiction as by the realization of the terrible fate of the human race if the former statement should be literally fulfilled.

Some Aspects of the Old Testament Hope

Only the more important aspects of the Old Testament thought can be considered here, and the matter is rendered the more difficult because of the divergent views. The broader differences must be brought out in our study.

1. The Judgment. An essential part in every expression of this hope was the idea of judgment. It is the presence of evil that contradicts the rule of Jehovah. This evil must be destroyed and the evildoers punished. But what is to be overthrown and who is to be punished? The answer to this shows two broadly different tendencies in Israel's religion, the nationalistic and the ethical. The book of Amos shows the contrast most sharply. There is a place for the nation in Amos' faith, but the decisive fact is ethical and not national. Jehovah is, first of all, the God of righteousness. His judgment will therefore fall upon evil wherever it is found, in Israel as well as Edom, in Judah as truly as in Philistia. That, in general, is the Old Testament teaching, the judgment will be upon evil as such. "For, behold, the day cometh,

it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4. 1, 2; see Isa. 2. 12). Commonly, however, the position is not so clearly put as with Amos, and after the exile it is almost wholly the judgment upon Israel's enemies of which we hear (Ezek. 38; Isa. 63. 1–6; Joel 3. 9–17; Zech. 1. 18–21; 14. 1–4; 12).

As to the manner in which the judgment shall come, the earlier prophets are more specific, at least in relation to Israel. They have historic conditions and historic means in mind. God will punish Israel through the nations, through the Assyrian, through "men of strange lips," by peoples from the north (Isa. 10. 5; 23. 11; Jer. 1. 13–16). But from the first there are references also to a punishment that will come through nature, by fire and famine and pestilence and earthquake. Nature and history are in sympathy and the disturbances of the one are reflected in the other. The later writers move farther toward apocalyptic ideas. There is less of the thought of a God moving in history, the events are more of the sheer supernatural order, and more catastrophic in their character.

2. *The Hope.* The hope is always the obverse of the judgment. The idea of judgment, indeed, is never merely negative. "Judgment" and "justice" are translations of the same Hebrew term, and it means quite as much the establishment of a righteous order as the punishment of the evildoer. The judgment is the means

of securing this larger justice. This new and righteous order is the rule of Jehovah; that is the abiding element in all these hopes. As to the form and meaning of this rule there are differences which cannot be discussed here. Jehovah's rule will be a political kingdom, as was that of David or Solomon, a kingdom here on earth. It will be an everlasting kingdom; of any limit to a thousand years or any other term there is no suggestion. It will bring a new order of righteousness and peace. With these will come outward blessings: peace in the animal world, fertility of soil, deserts changed to gardens, a far greater span of human life—indeed, a real transformation of nature, while Jerusalem shall be rebuilt and temple and worship restored. Scattered Israel will be returned and her boundaries enlarged. Some passages portray impressively the rule of the Messianic King under whom these blessings are to be secured. In only a few late passages does there occur the idea of immortality or of a resurrection of the righteous dead to share the blessings of the new kingdom (Psa. 16. 10; 17. 15; 49. 15; 73. 23, 24; Isa. 26. 19; Dan. 12. 2).

These ideas naturally are not all found in any one writer, and there appears again with one the larger stress upon the national and material, with another the emphasis upon the spiritual, the ethical, the universal. With respect to the latter we have the wonderful pictures of the changed heart that shall be given to men, of the outpouring of God's Spirit upon them, the beautiful suggestion that Jehovah himself will dwell in the midst of his people, and the idea of blessings that shall be shared by Israel and the other nations in like manner. One aspect is common to all these hopes, it is the ex-

pectation that the deliverance is at hand. None of these writers are looking to a distant future. Not all of them are as specific, for example, as Jeremiah, but all of them await the coming change in the time just before them.

3. Israel and the Nations. These last words have already suggested our next question. What was the place of the nations in relation to this hope of Israel? Was the hope purely nationalistic; or did Israel rise to a world view, to a really universal religion? Here is a searching test of the moral and spiritual elevation of the prophet's message. How far does he possess a real, ethical monotheism? How far did he grasp the high truth that Jehovah alike in mercy and judgment was the God of all the earth? No simple answer can be given to this question because the Old Testament shows the conflict of two tendencies, one nationalistic, the other universal and ethical, of which neither won a clear victory.

The earlier teaching brings the noblest message of the Old Testament, a message still needed amid the strife of selfish nationalism to-day. There is one God of all the earth; his good will is toward all nations and his righteousness will be shown to all. He led Israel out of Egypt, but it is equally true that he brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir (Amos 9. 7). As his hand has directed them in the past, so Jehovah has his purpose for the nations in the future. Long after Amos an unknown prophet wrote one of the noblest messages of the Old Testament as a protest against those who saw nothing in Jehovah's purpose but a punishment of the nations and an exaltation of Israel over

her foes. The book of Jonah is the declaration that Jehovah's purpose of mercy extends to all peoples. Unsurpassed in breadth of outlook is the passage in Isaiah 19. Here Israel takes her place not as preeminent but as one among equals, joined with her ancient oppressors in God's design of ultimate good. "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isa. 19. 24, 25). To these must be added the message of the unknown prophet whom we call the second Isaiah. No one pondered more deeply than he the question of Israel's sufferings, of Jehovah's purpose with Israel, and her relations to the nations. His answer is given in the "Suffering Servant" passages (Isa. 42. 1–9; 49. 1–9; 50. 4–9; 52. 13 to 53. 12). Israel has suffered, he declares, and beyond the punishment of the nation for her sins there is a suffering of the righteous remnant that is to be accounted for. That problem is not to be answered by the punishment of the nations and the glories of Israel's restoration. Rather it is Jehovah's purpose that by these unmerited sufferings the nations may be brought to repentance and turn to Jehovah and be healed. And these passages do not stand alone. By their side must be placed references like Jer. 3. 17; 12. 15; Deut. 4. 19ff.; 32. 8; Mal. 1. 11; Isa. 2. 2–4; Zeph. 2. 11; Psa. 65. 2, 5; 86. 9; 87. 4, 5. Here is nationalism finding its true place in a universal religion. God does not play favorites. He has not chosen Israel for herself and regardless of other considerations. For her sins she too must suffer judgment, and the blessings

of the coming day are not for her alone. But out of the sufferings there comes a remnant, a purified Israel. And in Jehovah's special concern for the nation and for this remnant there lies the great purpose of the good of all peoples. Israel is chosen in a special sense to be the servant of Jehovah, and therein lies the clue to the meaning of her history.

At the same time there are passages that point in an opposite direction. In some later writings we are given a picture of a last great conflict in which the nations shall be destroyed (Obad. vs. 15, 16; Zech. 14. 12–15; Ezek. 38, 39; Joel 3). In other passages we read that the nations are to be the servants of Israel; they shall bring the Israelites back from the lands in which they have been scattered, and Israel shall rule over them as subject nations. It will be simply a reversed autocracy; the captives shall serve as slaves of Israel, tilling their fields and building their cities, and their kings and queens shall be body servants and nurse maids, even licking the dust of their captor's feet. The Jews meanwhile shall live on the tribute of wealth that is brought to them (Isa. 14. 2; 49. 22, 23; 60. 10; 61. 5, 6). The nations are to come to Jerusalem, to worship Jehovah, Zechariah tells us, but this apparently is a recognition of religious lordship corresponding to the political supremacy, and the writer makes plain that it is done under threat of dire penalties (Zech. 14. 16–19). These foreigners, however, have no right to enter the temple, nor, indeed, according to one writer, may they even enter the city (Zech. 14. 21; Ezek. 44. 9; Joel 3. 17). The extreme of this spirit is reflected in the imprecatory psalms, which look forward to the Day of Judgment and cry for venge-

ance. In cruel vindictiveness they pray for the death of women and little children, and even demand that the prayer of those that cry out to God shall not be heard (Psa. 59. 13–15; 137. 8, 9; 58. 10; 109. 7–15).

4. There remains then the question as to how, aside from the act of divine judgment, there shall be brought about this new condition of peace and righteousness. For the most part the prophets do not raise this question. Where faith is strongest there is least of concern about method and detail. There are, however, some notable suggestions which, though they did not bear fruitage in Jewish thought, yet received their fulfillment in Christian faith. There is first that noble message contained in Isaiah 55, in which the power of the word of God to men is portrayed. Here is the thought of the word of truth as that which shall work out God's will for the good of men. More penetrating still is the thought of Jeremiah (Jer. 31). He had seen the failure of mere reform in law and worship. And what could the slaughter of Israel's enemies do toward making a new day? It was a new spirit that men needed and that Jehovah must give: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Side by side with this should be placed the message of the second Isaiah concerning the suffering servant: only by sacrifice and self-self-giving in love and service are men to be redeemed from their sins. The lofty position suggested by these prophets was not maintained. Ezekiel still speaks of the change of heart, but he evidently pins his faith to that great system of ritual and sacrifice which was to make evident the holiness of Jehovah and to secure the

holiness of the people. In so doing he became in fact the father of those who rested their hopes of the future upon Israel as a separated and law-keeping people, while, on the other hand, the growing apocalypticism, going side by side with this legalism, built its hope upon deeds of external power by which in a sudden revolution Jehovah should bring in the new day.

Summary and Conclusion

From this brief review it will be seen that there were two tendencies at work in Hebrew-Jewish thought concerning the future hope. The one is spiritual, ethical, universal. It rests back upon the prophetic vision of Jehovah which we find, for example, with Amos, Micah, and Isaiah, the conception of Jehovah as the God of righteousness and the God of all men. The implications of their faith were not always worked out, and yet its outlines were present. It meant the emphasis upon righteousness as against ritual. It laid little stress upon the religious forms and institutions that were peculiar to Israel. Its ideal of religion, as of God, pointed to universalism. Jehovah is interested in all nations and plans for all; Israel is chosen for service, not for selfish privilege. In Jeremiah, at length, there comes the realization that the rule of such a God must come by spiritual transformation, and that this will be the essence of the new kingdom.

The other tendency is equally clear. The conception of God is nationalistic and so is the hope. Jehovah is, first of all, the God of Israel; his coming rule will be the triumph of the nation Israel with other peoples in subjection. The coming judgment is thought of more and

more as a judgment on the nations. With this rule over the nations there goes the ideal of separation from the nations. The special laws and institutions of Israel are therefore emphasized, for, on the one hand, they bring out her position of favor as the people of the law, and, on the other, they help to separate her from the nations (circumcision, Sabbath, laws of holiness). Thus the ritual emphasis tends to displace the ethical, and the scribe and priest to supplant the prophet. With political glory comes naturally the thought of material blessings. It must not be supposed that Old Testament writers can be divided clearly between these two positions. These are tendencies, and Ezekiel is an illustration of how they mingle in one man; but the tendencies are both present, and it is the latter that triumphs in Judaism.

In all this we do not yet have the explanation of premillennialism. There is nothing here of a limited earthly kingdom, nor any suggestion of a heavenly kingdom to succeed this. On the other hand, the millennial kingdom of the Adventists is just such a political kingdom as that in these Old Testament writings. As between the two tendencies indicated above, however, modern premillennialism follows the second, or lower. It emphasizes the permanent privilege of the Jews unforfeited by the conduct of that people, it puts the other nations in a subordinate position, the judgment which introduces the millennium is upon the nations and the last great conflict is waged against them, while the central religious feature of its coming kingdom is an elaborate reintroduction of temple sacrifice and ceremonial holiness as outlined by Ezekiel.

CHAPTER II

THE APOCALYPTIC HOPE

THE Jewish apocalypses are a group of writings that appear in the three centuries between B. C. 200 and A. D. 100. The word "apocalypse" means "an unveiling," in this case an uncovering of the future. Tracts for bad times some one has aptly called them. They face the ancient problem; how can we believe in a good God in this world where evil triumphs and the people of God suffer? Their answer, broadly speaking, is that of the prophets: the evil is to be overthrown and the good is yet to reign. This answer is given not in argument or by simple declaration of faith. It is set forth in the form of an extended program of future events given through dreams and visions with elaborate pictures and symbols. The apocalyptists are the successors of the prophets, and yet a comparison, especially with the great preexilic prophets, shows far-reaching differences. Several circumstances help to explain this change from Hebrew prophecy to Jewish apocalyptic.

CHANGED CONDITIONS

1. The problem of the individual had appeared. The earlier stages of human thought consider man only as part of a group; religion is a matter of the family or clan or nation. The prophets dealt with the future of the nation, and alike the punishment and the blessing of which they spoke was for the people as a whole. But Israel was sharing in a general movement of thought in

that old world, the growing sense of the significance of the individual. There might be a glorious future for Israel, but what did this avail the saints who would not see that day? And what about the wicked who flourished and went in peace to their graves after a long life? This is a new aspect of the question of the future hope, and the answer to it brings in a new circle of ideas that meets us here for the first time: individual resurrection and judgment, individual punishment and reward, heaven and hell. All this necessarily brought with it radical changes in the thought of that deliverance to which men looked forward.

2. The outward lot of the Jews as a nation had changed for the worse. Aside from the temporary triumph under the Maccabees, the people found itself helpless in the grasp of great world powers. The mood was one of growing pessimism. The world seemed to be under the absolute domination of evil. There seemed less and less chance of any deliverance that might come in the course of historic events; only some miracle of divine intervention could save. The hopeless outlook is reflected again and again: "I have seen how thou dost suffer the sinners and dost spare the ungodly, how thou hast destroyed thy people and preserved their enemies; and hast not made known at all unto any how this course of thine shall be abandoned. Have the deeds of Babylon been better than those of Sion?" (4 Ezra 3. 30, 31.)

3. There is a change in the thought of God's relation to the world. More and more the emphasis is laid upon the transcendence of God, and the sense of God's living presence and action in the world grows ever less. Vari-

ous influences probably mingle here. In part it may have been the effort to guard the idea of God from things earthly and to separate him from the hopelessly evil world. Persian dualism with its doctrine of spirits may have aided. The pessimistic outlook had its influence, for how could God be present in such a world? In any case, God was more and more removed from his world. An earlier day had shown a vivid sense of a God who was present in all the world's life, whose favor was seen in falling rain and gleaming harvest, whose voice could be heard in the thunders of the storm, whose presence led the people to victory, whose frown was felt in time of defeat, whose plans even a great conqueror like Cyrus was carrying out. The apocalyptist sees this living God only in the past or in the longed for future. The present world does not know him. He sits far aloft. Angels great and lesser stand between God and man, and various heavens separate his abode from earth.

All this is reflected in the spirit of the apocalyptic writer and his method. The simple personal name of Jehovah disappears; it is used now only in magic rites. God is the great Sovereign, like an Oriental potentate, and we meet only such names as Most High, King of Kings, Lord of Lords. The prophet heard the word of Jehovah in his heart; the apocalyptist in sleep or swoon sees a vision. The prophet spoke with God, the apocalyptist is instructed by angels or brought by them to the heavenly places. There is a keen and regretful sense that the age of prophecy is past, the time when God spoke directly to men. The mood is reflected in one of the late psalms (74. 9):

"We see not our signs:
There is no more any prophet;
Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long."

And so the apocalyptist does not venture to speak in his own name, but takes that of some worthy of the past, an Enoch, a Solomon, an Ezra, a Daniel. And his material is taken mainly from the past, either from the prophets or from earlier apocalypticism. Unfulfilled prophecies are adjusted according to some new scheme, times and periods are outlined, figures and symbols are elaborated, and highly artificial visions set forth.

This apocalypticism did not appear full-fledged. It was a gradual development from prophecy, and there are writings which clearly show the transition. The signs of change appear with the prophets after the exile, beginning with Ezekiel. In Zechariah, Joel, and Isaiah 24 to 27 we have significant apocalyptic passages, all of late date. Daniel is the first great apocalyptic writing, placed by scholars generally at the beginning of the Maccabean period, in the first part of the second century B. C.

The Teachings of the Jewish Apocalypses

Our attention here is given primarily to the Jewish apocalypses outside the canon, although the influence of Daniel especially is strongly felt in these writings. There are wide differences in the doctrines of these productions and yet it is possible to set forth in broad outline their common teaching as this bears upon the future hope.

1. In the apocalypses a world philosophy takes the place of the prophetic sermon. The prophet dealt with a definite historic situation. He looked at the conditions

of his time, judging the conduct of men in the light of his knowledge of God. He summoned men to repent, bringing the threat of judgment and the promise of deliverance. It was the work of the preacher. The apocalyptist has a practical purpose too, that of the encouragement of faith, but his outlook and his method are different. He meets the problem of men by a philosophy of history that takes in all the ages. Matters stand in the present evil case because that is part of the plan, and as part of the same great scheme there will come deliverance. Hence we have the familiar outlines of world history, the epochs and ages, the millennial weeks, and all the rest. These writers differed widely among themselves in these schemes, as they have done ever since. Among others we read of ten thousand years of world history (1 Enoch 16. 1; 18. 16; 21. 6), of ten weeks (1 Enoch 93. 3–9; 91. 12–17), of twelve periods (4 Ezra 14. 11; compare 2 Baruch 53). Most interesting, however, because of its influence upon apocalyptic thinking of later times, is the idea that history is divided into a week of seven periods of a thousand years each after the analogy of the week of creation. This we find in 2 Enoch 33. 1, 2, which Professor Charles places in the first half of the first Christian century. The seven millennia of history are here followed by the eternity when time is no more. "And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first created after my work, and that the first seven revolve in the form of the seventh thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of not counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours." All these schemes are

agreed, however, at one point: the history of the world falls into two ages, the present and that to come. Everything revolves about this distinction. The two ages are absolutely contrasted; the former is a reign of evil, the latter is the rule of God.

2. The apocalyptic scheme of history is strictly deterministic, with an order of events marked out from the beginning by God. "Nothing has been neglected by him even to the least thing, but all things he hath foreseen and caused all to come forth" (Assumption of Moses, 12. 4). The period of evil also must continue for the time set by him:

> "For he has weighed the age in the balance,
> And with measure has measured the times,
> And by numbers has numbered the seasons:
> Neither will he move nor stir things,
> Till the measure appointed be fulfilled" (4 Ezra 4. 36, 37; see also 11. 44; 2 Baruch 54, 1; 81. 4; 83. 1).

The end of this age is determined by the completion of the number of men who are to be born (2 Baruch 23. 4, 5), or by the completion of the number of the saints (4 Ezra 4. 35, 36). The latter conception has been most influential in subsequent thought (Rev. 6. 11, marginal translation. Compare the Anglican burial service: "Beseeching thee. . . shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom." This idea is eliminated in the revision of this service as used by the Protestant Episcopal Church of America and the Methodist Episcopal Church.)

3. Apocalypticism is strongly supernatural, laying all stress upon the deliverance through God, but its super-

naturalism is mechanical. Religious faith builds its hope for deliverance upon the power of God, but this power may be conceived as acting in two quite different ways. For a spiritual-ethical faith God works as an indwelling spirit bringing about moral transformation. It was this way that Jeremiah pointed (31. 31–33). For apocalypticism God moves in a magical-miraculous fashion, as an irresistible force coming from without. It has lost faith in the adequacy of moral and spiritual forces.

In passing, two comments may be made upon these first three points. On the divine side they aggravate the problem of evil in trying to settle it, for this deterministic scheme throws the responsibility for this evil age upon God upon whose will alone its continuance depends. On the human side this scheme seems to empty history of moral meaning. There is no reason apparent why there should be any such age of evil. The ideas of growth and development have no place in this scheme. The present age has no organic connection with what follows, and is in no fundamental sense a preparation for it. The latter appears as an irruption—it is a new structure upon the ruins of the old. The prophets summoned men to a repentance that was to bring change. Here the order of events is fixed and the saint has simply to watch and wait.

4. Apocalypticism is markedly dualistic and is here in sharp contrast with the older Hebrew faith. The Hebrews recognized the presence of evil in the world, but it was evil wrought by man, and nature and history were both under the control of Jehovah. In apocalypticism the rule of the world is, in fact, divided. The

Satan of Zechariah 3. 1, 2 and of Job was simply the messenger of Jehovah or the accuser of men; now he becomes the source of evil, the ruler of a kingdom of evil, and even the ruler of this world. But though Satan is the chief, he is only one of these angels of whom large numbers are given by name. The great conflict is not to be fought in the hearts of men or with the nations; it has become something transcendental. The opposing forces are now God and his angels on one side ranged against Satan and the evil spirits on the other. These evil angels are spoken of as watchers, or shepherds. They represent the nations and have control of them. It is they who have brought evil into the world and taught men the ways of wrong. So long as they control the world there can be nothing but evil for God's saints. In like manner deliverance is to come to earth not by a process of moral redemption but by the overthrow of these spiritual forces by God, who with the good angels and their archangelic chiefs stands over against them. In these pages there is, therefore, little place given to the prophetic summons to repentance. In the place of a moral redemption this apocalyptic dualism puts a super-terrestrial conflict. The head of this kingdom of evil is variously named Satan, Belial, Mastema, the Dragon.

5. These facts indicate the reason why apocalypticism is purely pessimistic as regards this age. That follows necessarily from the idea of a God remote, a world under the control of the forces of evil, and a course of events marked out so as to leave no other lot for this time.

6. The apocalyptic conception of God is marked by two elements in particular, the idea of transcendence and that of absolute and autocratic sovereignty. Tran-

scendence means here not so much elevation of character as separation from the world. That follows from the idea of the world; evil as it is and under the control of Satan, it forms no place for a living and indwelling God. The Jewish idea of holiness is influential also. Under the influence of legalism holiness was primarily ritual, not so much a matter of positive character as of separation from defilement. With God it meant, as Ezekiel clearly shows, rather that sovereign power and glory which lifted the divine beyond the human than any moral quality in which God and man might be united. Such an exaltation is very naturally indicated by physical figures, by pictures of light and dazzling glory, and by the reference to intermediary angels, through whom alone such a God can be approached (Enoch 14). With this transcendence goes the emphasis upon power, upon the sheer sovereignty of might. The background of this thought of God is the Oriental monarchy. There are throne and court and attendant hosts. Jehovah is approached like an Oriental monarch with set forms and phrases. What happens on earth of good as of evil is because this King decides. What he does is inscrutable. When Ezra asks concerning this evil age, why it is and why it continues, there is no answer. It is for man to obey, not to know; he can know only earthly things, not things of heaven (4 Ezra 3 and 4).

The reason for this picture is apparent. In these portrayals of power and splendor these writers expressed their faith in God as one who rose above the kings of earth and could overturn all foes, even the mightiest. But all these labored efforts cannot approach the sublimity of the thought of God as given in a single one of the

simple pictures of Jesus. For he found the glory of God in character and not in sheer power. In contrast to the apocalyptists, Jesus, like the prophets, speaks to the conscience of men. He has no pictures of Oriental court scenes, but he does bring near a living and merciful God with whom men can have fellowship and to whom they can all come simply as children and say, "Our Father."

The Apocalyptic Hope

What was the hope that apocalypticism held forth? The large variations that occur in these writings, the wealth of their pictures, their indifference to matters of system or consistency—all this makes it difficult to attempt a summary answer. Certain characteristic features, however, can be pointed out, and this will be done without the fruitless effort at giving any order of events.

1. *The Imminent End.* As in all apocalyptic thought, the end of the age is viewed as near at hand. The age is hastening to its close. The earth shows signs of decay and strange portents in nature point to the end. The Messianic woes, the birth-pangs of the new age, will signal the change, involving increased wickedness, and even greater distress for the saints.

2. *The Resurrection.* The concern of the prophets was with the resurrection of the nation (Hos. 6. 2; Ezek. 37); individual resurrection appears but late. Ecclesiastes 3. 19–20 is apparently aimed against the new doctrine: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath and man hath no preeminence above the beasts: for all

is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." It was still a matter of strife as late as the time of our Lord, and the Sadducees were on this point the "conservatives" opposed to the "new theology." The thought of a just God demanded that good and evil should not share the same fate, rather that some future state should compensate for the inequalities here where the good suffered and the evil prospered. And as religion became more individual and spiritual, as reflected in the psalms, faith in Jehovah would lead to the assurance that he would not leave those who trusted in him to the empty shadows of sheol (see Psa. 49. 14, 15; 73. 24–26). Such an idea would develop gradually. Isa. 26. 1– 19 suggests the resurrection of the righteous. Later there appears the idea of the resurrection of the evil for purposes of punishment. Daniel 12. 2, 3 apparently has in mind only the Jews, and but a portion of these, as being raised. It refers to saints and sinners, but the gift of life seems to be only for the real and faithful saints, while those sinners are raised for punishment who had oppressed or opposed the saints. Not a few later apocalyptic passages suggest the general resurrection (1 Enoch 51. 1–3; 2 Baruch 30. 2–5; 4 Ezra 7. 32–36).

3. *The Judgment.* The Judgment appears in double form. It still occurs in the old sense as the great day of conflict in which the hosts of wickedness are to be overthrown. But with the idea of the resurrection there appears a second kind of judgment. The field of battle gives place to a court with the Most High seated upon the throne. Books are opened, and according to the record of deeds performed the award of good or evil is

made, the reference being sometimes to individuals and sometimes to nations (4 Ezra 7. 33–44). In this latter Judgment the dead and the living are thus included. These two Judgments, of course, could be held together.

4. *The New Heaven and Earth.* The prophets had looked forward to a renewed and changed earth, where spiritual blessings would have as their counterpart a wonderful fertility of soil and where even the nature of the wild beasts would be transformed. One late passage mentions specifically a new heaven and new earth (Isa. 65. 17; 66. 22). It is easy to see how the idea of the resurrection would influence this. It is true that the idea of resurrection sometimes meant little more than a restoration to present physical conditions; but it tended to imply a higher and more spiritual state, especially where the Hellenic influence was felt. As such it would suggest not simply a renewed earth, but a heaven and earth totally different from what went before. And this tendency was furthered by the idea that the present world was utterly corrupt, and that its decay would soon end in destruction. So we read in 1 Enoch 91. 16:

> "And the first heaven shall depart and pass away,
> And a new heaven shall appear,
> And all the powers of the heavens shall give sevenfold light."

With this appeared the idea of a world conflagration in which the old heavens and earth would be destroyed: "Then shall flow a ceaseless cataract of raging fire, and shall burn land and sea, and the firmament of heaven and the stars and creation itself it shall cast into one molten mass and clean dissolve" (Sibylline Books, 3.

84–87). In this new heaven and earth time shall not be any more, nor death, nor evil of any kind. In earlier writings the future abode of the saints is spoken of as paradise. It is located on the earth and is placed sometimes in the distant East, again in the northeast or northwest. Later thought turns to heaven as the abode of the blessed. 2 Enoch 8 and 9 speak of a glorious place in the third heaven, while in 2 Baruch 51.10 we are told:

"In the heights of that world shall they dwell,
And they shall be made like unto angels."

5. *Hell.* It is in these writings that there appears first among the Jews the idea of a place of punishment for the wicked. The Old Testament, with no conception of a general resurrection and judgment, has no doctrine of heaven or hell except as the latter is suggested by Isa. 66. 24 and Dan. 12. 2. It knows simply an underworld, or Sheol (mistranslated "hell" in the old version), the place where the departed maintain their shadowy existence. The apocalypses bring in the idea of a place of punishment for the wicked following upon the resurrection and judgment. Sometimes the name "Gehenna" (that is, vale of Hinnom) is used for this. "Abyss of fire" and "pit of torment" are other terms employed. Later on Sheol (Hades) loses its original meaning and is used for the last abode of the wicked.

6. The figure of the Messiah does not play a large part in the Jewish apocalypses. The idea of a Messianic King belongs naturally with the thought of an earthly kingdom, that is, with the older and simpler hope of Israel. It is significant that in Psalm 17 of the Psalms

of Solomon, where the old conception of a political realm upon earth appears most clearly, there appears also the noblest picture of the Messiah that is given in this period. With the more transcendental, or heavenly kingdom, that is common to these writings, there is less place for the Messiah either as the head of conquering armies or as the king. The deliverance is more commonly viewed as the direct deed of God, who himself destroys the foes and presides over the judgment and establishes the kingdom. Apparently, it was more in the thoughts and hopes of the common people that the thought of the coming deliverer had place.

The Intermediate Kingdom

In our study thus far we have noted two broadly differing conceptions of the coming kingdom. The older idea is that of an earthly and political kingdom. With apocalypticism the scene becomes more transcendental, lifted to a higher sphere, with the thought of the new heaven and earth that follow upon the resurrection and Judgment. It must not be supposed, however, that these differences were worked out clearly and stated in systematic manner. As a matter of fact, in the visions and dreams of the apocalyptists these two ideas were often mingled. Men clung to the older hope of Israel's political revival while giving place to the newer conceptions. What seems to have happened then was that some one conceived the way of uniting these two hopes, the national and earthly with the more heavenly. The former was thought of as coming first as a temporary or intermediate kingdom, to be succeeded in turn by the transcendental and eternal kingdom of the later hopes.

The first appearance of this idea of an intermediate kingdom is probably in 1 Enoch 93. 3–10; 91. 12–17, which Professor Charles puts at about B. C. 100. World history falls into a scheme of ten weeks. The Messianic kingdom begins with the eighth week, during which judgment is to be executed upon Israel's foes and the temple rebuilt. In the ninth week judgment is consummated, and "all the works of the godless shall vanish from all the earth." But not until the close of the tenth week does the final Judgment come,

"In which he will execute vengeance amongst the angels.
And the first heaven shall depart and pass away,
And a new heaven shall appear."

Apparently, at this time the resurrection of the righteous occurs (91. 10):

"And the righteous shall arise from their sleep,
And wisdom shall arise and be given unto them."

The question as to the length of this Messianic kingdom was a matter upon which opinions differed. In 4 Ezra, a much later composition, we read of those who "are delivered from the predicted evils," who shall see the wonders of this reign. "For my Son the Messiah shall be revealed, together with those who are with him, and shall rejoice the survivors four hundred years." After this

"the earth shall restore those that sleep in her,
and the dust those that are at rest therein.
And the Most High shall be revealed upon the throne
of Judgment."

"And then shall the pit of torment appear,
and over against it the place of refreshment;
The furnace of Gehenna shall be made manifest,
and over against it the Paradise of delight" (4 Ezra 7. 28–36. Compare 12. 34).

2 Baruch also refers to a temporary Messianic rule in which evil shall be removed and the Messianic King shall care for his people. "And it shall come to pass after these things, when the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, that he shall return in glory" (2 Baruch 30. 1; compare chapters 73, 74, and 40. 3).

The duration of this temporary Messianic kingdom was variously fixed. The period of four hundred years referred to in 4 Ezra above was gained by a combination of Gen. 15. 13 with Psa. 90. 15. The former sets the time of Israel's affliction in Egypt at four hundred years. The latter prays:

"Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil."

Where the world history was divided into seven periods after the analogy of the seven days of the creation week, there the intermediate kingdom became the seventh day, the day of rest. The duration of each of these world days as a thousand years would be suggested by Psa. 90. 4 (compare 2 Pet. 3. 8), and so there was established that period of time which has given to this intermediate kingdom the familiar name of "millennium." Other periods of duration besides these two were considered in the discussion of the rabbis, but the last named triumphed. This conception prevailed in Christian

thought, appearing in the one apocalypse of the New Testament (Rev. 20. 1–3).

Apocalypticism and Premillennialism

It is in this Jewish apocalypticism that the most significant origins of premillennialism are to be found. There are, of course, notable differences, especially as we study modern Adventism with its scholastic treatment of the letter of the Bible and elaboration of system. But alike in the general scheme of events, in the animating spirit, and in the underlying conceptions there is close resemblance. As to the scheme of events, that appears in the central idea of an intermediate, limited, earthly kingdom which precedes the heavenly kingdom. The ideas of the restored Jewish state, the Jewish domination of the nations, the regathering of Israel with rebuilt temple and renewed sacrifices—these come from the Old Testament writings. But these schemes of world history, with their epochs and ages and succession of kingdoms, this transcendence of God and dualism in the thought of the world, this robbing of human history of moral meaning, this hopelessness as to spiritual forces and reliance upon the sheer power of omnipotence, this whole thought of God as sovereign power rather than as a redeeming moral power—all this shows the kinship.

The Service Rendered by Apocalypticism

With all its limitations, apocalypticism rendered a real service and expressed certain great truths. 1. It brought a message of comfort and courage, sustaining faith in days of darkness and great trial. Whatever the world shows, it said: "God rules, God will save. Be strong and endure." 2. It met the problem of the

individual hope by its doctrine of resurrection. 3. It met a moral demand by its doctrine of judgment and heaven and hell, with their declaration that evil and good receive their due and sure award. 4. However unsatisfactory the form, it gave a philosophy of history and asserted that a purpose of God lay back of the whole. 5. It kept a place for the social hope. Over against oppression and wrong it asserted in its millennial kingdom the idea of a new social order.

It has often been pointed out that the law was the husk which preserved the kernel of faith for Judaism, its very separatism and literalism serving to keep Israel and her ethical monotheism from the fate that overtook other people in the melting pot of that old Graeco-Roman world. So apocalypticism preserves the faith in a good God at a time when such a faith could not perhaps have asserted itself in a more spiritual form. It is the duty of the historical student thus to appreciate the truth that is present and the service that was rendered. He will not, however, mistake the husk for the kernel, nor cling to outworn forms or partial truths when larger truth is present.

CHAPTER III

THE KINGDOM HOPE WITH JESUS

THE religion of the Jews in Jesus' day has been compared to an ellipse with its two foci, the law and the hope. Viewed from one standpoint, the whole religion centered in the practice of the law, the daily concern of every loyal Jew in all his life. In a deeper sense, however, it was the hope of the future that was the center of faith and the spring of its power. It is a mistake to assume that there was any one form in which this hope was held by all. We have seen how wide a diversity there was even in the apocalyptic writings, and there were still other forms in which this hope expressed itself. Some made the Messiah of central importance, while in other writings he is not mentioned. Some emphasized the heavenly, or transcendent, character of the age to come; others thought of it more in earthly terms. Still others, as we have seen, seem to have held to a temporary Messianic reign to be succeeded by the heavenly kingdom.

It was, then, in no strange language that John the Baptist spoke when he proclaimed that the kingdom of God and the judgment of God were at the door. And yet we note important differences between John and the apocalyptic writers whose language he uses. They were writers of books, conning ancient prophecies and evolving new visions; John was a preacher, a man with a living voice. They hid themselves behind the names of an Enoch, a Noah, or a Daniel; John spoke out of his

own heart and in his own person. Above all, John's message came with a tremendous moral summons, with an attack on sins and a call to repentance. In other words, John spoke in apocalyptic forms, but his work was that of a prophet.

Was Jesus an Apocalyptist?

The message of Jesus too must be studied not only in the light of the prophets but in that of the apocalyptic thought of the day. Its background and beginning were like those of John. Jesus spoke to the same ardent hopes of the people and in the forms that were in their mind. The kingdom of God is at hand; God is coming in judgment to overturn the evil and set up his rule. Repent, therefore, and believe the good tidings. These things, Jesus declared, would happen within a generation. Later he declared that he himself must suffer and die, but that he would return to his disciples. Such return he apparently expected in visible form and for the purpose of completing his work. Thus far we must go and frankly recognize the error of earlier students who passed over so largely this side of Jesus' message.

But must we go further? Not a few are insisting upon this in our day. The whole message of Jesus, say these, is eschatological. They declare that Jesus had no interest or end in his teaching except with reference to the coming age which was to be totally different from this. He did not teach any ethics of the kingdom; what he said, for example, about love and service and suffering was only "interim ethics," intended merely for the brief period before the end of the age. It does not apply to the coming kingdom, for then all

shall rule. The suffering and the denial of this world, like repentance, are simply preparatory for the new. Jesus' moral teaching is thus only a passing phase. The kingdom is not something ethical but purely transcendental and heavenly. What the church has used, Jesus' moral and spiritual teaching, was, accordingly, in his mind purely incidental and provisional, his sole message being in reality this declaration of the nearness of the new age. It follows, then, as Schweitzer declares, speaking for the advanced wing of this school, that Jesus becomes a stranger and an enigma to our day, living in a world of thought that we can no longer share. Such is the position of the extreme eschatological school.

Two general considerations must be taken up before we can discuss matters of detail. Even in so brief a study as this some position must be taken with reference to the sources of our knowledge of Jesus' teachings. That Jesus looked forward to the speedy coming of a new age is attested by numerous passages scattered throughout the synoptic Gospels. There is at the same time a marked contrast to the Jewish apocalyptic writings, an absence of elaborate calculations, of depiction of signs and of the drawing of pictures to appeal to the imagination. An apparent exception to this appears in the so-called apocalyptic discourses (Mark 13; parallels, Matt. 24, Luke 21). Here is a more or less extended program of signs and events, with a depiction of the "Messianic woes." The writer holds with those who believe that we have here a later composition embodying sayings of Jesus, perhaps uttered at different times even, but amplified and modified. The teachings of Jesus were

transmitted orally for a considerable period before being committed to writing. The minds of the disciples were full of these apocalyptic ideas and the current phrases and images were undoubtedly familiar to them. Their attitude is undoubtedly reflected in just such a word as Acts 1. 6, little as this comports with unquestioned sayings of Jesus. Under such conditions ideas are colored in the very moment in which they are received. With no thought of modification, and simply with the effort to make clear the Master's meaning, amplification and addition would easily occur. Let it be remembered too that in some circles at least the current apocalyptic writings were held by the first Christians in the highest esteem, in a sense at least as sacred writings.

Of amplifications and additions as such we have evidence elsewhere in the Gospels. Accepting with most scholars the priority in time of the second Gospel, a comparison of Matthew and Mark indicates how some of these elaborations occurred and how others might well have been made. A reading of these passages shows further, how the references to several events have been mingled together. Joined together here are statements concerning the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (Mark 13. 2, 14–20; Luke 21. 20–24), references to the persecution of the disciples (Mark 13. 9–13), and words which speak of the coming of the Son of man (Mark 13. 3–8, 21–32). The elaborate depiction of signs and events in this connection is not only out of harmony with Jesus' attitude elsewhere but contradicts the very definite assertion of Mark 18. 32 that the day and hour were known only to God.

All this gives us no ground for denying that Jesus

used the apocalyptic framework of ideas common to his day, with its thought of a new age near at hand to be brought in by a deed of God. However, it does forbid our detailed dogmatic use of these passages and the simple transfer of the current apocalyptic program to Jesus. Leaving this aside, the purpose of Jesus in these passages is clear, and it corresponds with his practical and ethical emphasis elsewhere. In the spirit of ancient prophecy he declares the destruction of the impenitent city that had not received its deliverer from God. He prepares his disciples for the future by warning them of coming persecution and exhorting them to watchfulness and steadfastness, a message repeated in various parables during these last days of his ministry. He strengthens their hope by declaring here, as elsewhere, that he will return to them.

A second general consideration of importance is that of the originality of Jesus as seen elsewhere in his teaching. The thoroughgoing eschatologists assume that every apocalyptic expression of Jesus indicates his adherence to the whole system. Jesus used the language and the thought forms of his day; to assume anything else would be to reject an historical revelation and to deny in principle the humanity of our Lord. But he gives to phrases and forms his own meaning, and his originality appears most clearly at the most vital points in religion. We see his independence in relation to the whole legalistic system of his day. The difference was not one of detail concerning Sabbath law or ceremonial purity; it was that of a revolutionary principle, as Paul later recognized, the idea of religion as a life of free self-determination and not outward conformity. He

uses the term "Messiah," but he gives it a content of his own; it may well have been his own use as well as his life and death which led the early church to find the Messiah in the "suffering servant" passages of Isaiah to which the Jewish rabbis did not think of turning for that purpose. Equally striking is his attitude toward the Old Testament, whether we think of what he chooses, of what he passes by, or of what he definitely sets aside. When we think of the limitations of the apocalyptic thought and writings of his day, it is incredible that he should have been a slavish adherent.

Jesus' Faith and Its Center

There is little question as to the central and determining element in Jesus' message; it is his thought of God. As with every great religious leader, it was not a system of doctrines but a faith that Jesus brought, and the whole horizon of that faith is filled with the thought of that God whom he knew in personal fellowship and whom he served in absolute devotion. Formulas lie on the outside of religion. Here is the heart; here is the source of Jesus' independence and power. He is no anxious collector of ideas or interpreter of past prophecies; out of this inner knowledge of God he says: "No one knoweth the Father save the Son." Here is the source of his originality; here he finds the answer to his questions. The painful legalism of his day disappears before the insight which he gains here, that men are simply to be children of their Father in likeness of spirit. Whatever his hope may have borrowed elsewhere in form, here is its vital source and shaping power. Without this God he could have had no such compelling

message of hope; with such a God not merely the ground of hope is given but form as well.

Here, at the center of all faith, there appears most clearly the contrast between Jesus and Jewish apocalypticism. The emphasis of apocalypticism is upon the power of God, that of Jesus is upon his character. For apocalypticism the glory of God is to be found in his majesty and his exaltation above men. All manner of pictures are used to portray that glory, but the figures are physical. Enoch is carried to distant heavens. He pictures walls of crystal, portals blazing with fire, a house of indescribable splendor, a Great Being surrounded by flames of fire so that no one can approach nor even angels enter before him. God is the distant and unapproachable. His titles are taken from Oriental autocracy. The simple name of Jehovah has disappeared; he is Lord of majesty, King of the ages, Holy Great One, and the Great Glory (Enoch 12 to 14). There is no want of reverence with Jesus' thought of God, nor lack of the sense of God's power, but it is the goodness of God that he wishes men to see. And that goodness so far from separating God brings him near to men; God is the searching Shepherd, the waiting Father. Jesus finds God not in the distant heavens, but in these common pictures of human life that tell of love and pity and service. He finds him too in nature, in the glory that decks the flowers, in the care that attends the least of birds. Anyone may find this God who will seek him; anyone may approach him who comes in humility and earnestness. Jesus himself lives in constant fellowship with him and would lead others into that fellowship. "No one knoweth the Father save the Son. . . . Come

unto me. . . . Learn of me." And he teaches men to call upon this God not as the Great Glory or as King of the Ages, but very simply as "our Father." Christianity has followed Jesus here, and not merely his word but his spirit. Not in physical splendor nor in sheer power has it found its highest revelation of God, but with Paul it has seen the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Significance of Jesus' Thought of God

The thought of God determines for Jesus the whole spirit and attitude of his life. The apocalyptic temper is usually a compound of hope and anxiety. The living experience of God is not strong enough to sustain it. It rests back upon a world philosophy. It supports itself with computations, with schemes of epochs and ages, with recountal of signs, and predictive programs. As times grow darker the pictures of outward glory and splendor are multiplied in the effort to sustain faith by the appeal to the imagination. The element of conflict is not wanting with Jesus, but the victorious power of his peace is clear. The last terrible experience does not shake his confidence; and the last source of that confidence is always the same, always this God and Father. "Fear not, little flock," he says to his followers; "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "Be not therefore anxious; . . . . your heavenly Father knoweth." And in this trust he himself never wavered: "Abba, Father, ... howbeit not what I will but what thou wilt." "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He is strangely blind to the deeper

realities who does not see that the heart of Jesus' message was in this vision of God, and that here lay his power with men.

It is this thought of God which determines Jesus' attitude toward the world. We have noted the dualism and pessimism of the apocalyptic conception: God is distant, evil has the power, man is hopeless as to this world, and dreams only of the next. The widely different outlook of Jesus is seen in Matt. 6. 25–34 and elsewhere. In Jesus' world not even a sparrow falls without the permission of God, and the least interest of man is his concern. Man need not, therefore, be anxious. The presence of evil Jesus recognized; he saw it indeed more clearly than the apocalyptist, for he discerned where it really lay. He was not indifferent to the ills of hunger and sickness and probably not to that of foreign oppression, but it was the presence of sin that concerned him most. Yet with all this he knew the power of the good. The final victory would come in the new day, but even now God and good were greater than evil; the sick were being healed, and evil spirits driven out, and the sins of men forgiven. Here, as elsewhere, one can get the total difference in atmosphere only by reading at length in the apocalypses.

The Question of Nationalism

The radical difference from apocalypticism appears again when we consider the elements of nationalism. Theoretically, the elements of nationalism should have disappeared from Jewish apocalypticism as individualism came in. The thoroughgoing apocalyptic scheme looks to the final judgment and award as individual

and ethical. In actual fact, however, the national element remains. The thought still moves about the glory and triumph of Israel, sometimes in connection with the final age, sometimes with the intermediate and earthly kingdom which has survived in modern Adventism. How strong the influence of this Jewish particularism was is seen in the question of Acts 1. 6: "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The apocalyptic scheme of history moves about the succession of great political empires with the triumph of Israel at the close. Jesus' fight is not against Rome nor any other empire, but against sin. He looks forward to no kingdom of Israel but to a fellowship of men in which love and righteousness shall rule. His kingdom is not national but broadly human. Whatever he may mean in saying that he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the kingdom he pictures is in no single feature Jewish. He declares that the kingdom is to be taken away from the Jewish nation, that men are to come from the east and the west and the north and the south to enter into the same. But more significant even than such specific utterances is the fact that what he says about entrance into the kingdom and the nature of the children of the kingdom is always moral and spiritual, always has reference to men as men and never to anything that marks the Jew as such. And all this flows inevitably from Jesus' conception of God, joined to the actual experience of Jesus as with mingled sorrow and joy he saw publicans and sinners, Gentiles included, press into the kingdom to which his people were indifferent. As for the spirit of vengeance, dreaming of conquering armies and slaughtered foes and subject peoples

bowing in submission, that may be found in Jewish apocalyptic and its modern counterpart; it has no place in Jesus' teaching.

The Nature of the Kingdom

We come to the crucial point in Jesus' teaching about the coming kingdom when we ask as to its nature. The teaching of Jesus is significant, first of all, in what it omits. The physical, the material, the national, all so dominant and so elaborately pictured in the apocalypses, are strikingly absent. Equally clear is Jesus' emphasis, and "vitality is a matter of emphasis." Jesus gives no description of the kingdom, but in very many passages he does speak of the children of the kingdom and of how things happen in the kingdom or in relation to it. But whether he speaks of the children of the kingdom, of the conditions of entrance thereto, or of the gifts of the kingdom, the emphasis is always upon the moral and spiritual. The beatitudes form only one of the signal evidences for all this. We get Jesus' thought here most clearly, however, when we call to mind the fact that the kingdom of God means the rule of God, and when we realize that what the rule of God means to a man depends directly upon what his thought of God is. Central in Jesus' thought of God, as we have seen, is the character of God. We are not surprised, then, when the sayings of Jesus constantly intimate that the rule of God means the sway of God's spirit in men's hearts. Undoubtedly, Jesus, like the prophets, believed that in the new world of God's consummated rule nature would be changed, sickness and suffering would be gone; but his emphasis is clearly upon the rule of a new spirit.

It is not enough to regard the negative side merely, the overthrow of the forces of evil; Paul too looked forward to such a victory, but quite in the spirit of Jesus he declared that the kingdom of God was "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." "Thy kingdom [rule] come" means for Jesus "thy will be done," and the commentary upon this is to be found in Matt. 5. 38–48. Here is no mere *ad interim* ethics. Prophet and apocalyptist alike had set forth the lofty idea that in the coming age God should dwell among men. Jesus does not point out here merely what men shall do in the days before the kingdom comes. He shows them what this God is and what men must be who are to live with him as his children. And that belongs to the next age as to this. Significant is the fact that it is this figure of father and son that Jesus constantly employs to depict the relation of God and man, not the figure of king and subject. And when Jesus uses the word "king," he gives to it his own meaning. The kingship that the Gentiles practice he repudiates, setting up his own idea of authority and greatness (Luke 22. 25ff.; Matt. 18. 1ff.; Matt. 20. 20off.). And this ideal for the children, let it be remembered, he finds in the spirit of the Father. Consistent with all this is the view that in his reference to the "new covenant," which stands for the new age, Jesus is thinking in line with that noblest expression of Old Testament vision of the new world found in Jer. 31. 31–34.

Present and Future

These considerations help us to answer the disputed question whether the kingdom for Jesus lay wholly in the future or not. Strictly speaking, prophetic and apoc-

alyptic writings alike assume a certain rule of God over the world in the present. The presence of evil, however, is a contradiction of this rule in principle and not simply in measure. Over against this evil they declare the coming reign of God. So Jesus taught; this was the good news, that the deliverance from evil was at the door. But here the comparison ceases. With apocalypticism the contrast between this age and the next is absolute—here the supremacy of evil, there the utter triumph of the good. With the apocalyptist all deliverance is in the future; it is not so with Jesus. He sees the good already mightier than the evil: the sick are being healed, the power of evil spirits broken, men's sins are being forgiven. In a moment of vision he sees Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. Men are entering into the kingdom; he can speak even now of the children of the kingdom, of men who are in the kingdom. For one thing, the Messiah is already present and the friends of the bridegroom are to rejoice and not to mourn (Luke 11. 17–20; 7. 22; 10. 18; Matt. 21. 31; 23. 13; 9. 15; 11. 11). He not merely asks men to repent in preparation for the coming kingdom, he summons them to live even now according to its laws. Indeed, he can offer them even now the life of the kingdom, leading them into the peace and joy of that fellowship with God which he himself enjoys (Matt. 11. 25–30). Just because it is ethical, the message of Jesus necessarily breaks through the rigid apocalyptic opposition of this age and the next. God is for him essentially the good Father, the relation between God and man is fundamentally that of likeness of inner spirit between Father and son, not that between Ruler and subject (Matt. 5. 43–48). Such a fellowship God

can establish even now, and Jesus rejoices over these beginnings of the rule of God in which the hopes of ancient days are being fulfilled (Luke 10. 17–24).

But with all this it must be added that the great emphasis of Jesus was upon the future. It may well be asked after what has been said: "If man himself has experienced God, if he has felt God living and working about him, if he has met the will and the love of God in Jesus, if he has found forgiveness for his guilt and help for his sorrow, are not for him the kingdom of God and its gifts already present?" (Weinel, Biblische Theologie des neuen Testaments, p. 198). Yes, and no. All this is the expression of God's presence and rule, but it is only the beginning; it is the dawn that suggests the day, but the day itself has not yet come. So, it seems clear, Jesus thought. How, then, did Jesus conceive that the consummation would take place? Here is the place where no dogmatic answer can be given. We are restrained in part by the problem of our sources, as pointed out above. Outside the long apocalyptic discourses we find with Jesus a notable reticence as to detail. Just because his faith is so strong in God and in his coming rule, he does not need to draw programs of the future after the apocalyptic manner. He can leave all this with God. At certain points, however, we can be fairly sure, and here the apocalyptic framework becomes most apparent. Apparently, Jesus expected in the near future some great manifestation of the power of God which would bring in the kingdom. Connected with this was his expectation that he himself would return to consummate his work and that this return would evidence his Messiahship to the men who had rejected him.

Whether with this consummation was to come the final Judgment and all the rest, that cannot be asserted positively upon the basis of our sources.

Questions and Conclusions

This study of Jesus' teaching concerning the coming kingdom brings us to certain questions and conclusions.

First of all we consider the fact that Jesus' expectation was not fulfilled in the form in which he held it. The kingdom was not consummated within the brief period that he seems to have anticipated, nor did he return in the manner in which the disciples, and apparently he himself, expected (Matt. 10. 23; 16. 28; 24. 34). Later passages in the New Testament indicate what a problem this was for the faith of the early church.

This situation has been met within the church in two ways. The premillennial method we have noted. It fastens upon the apocalyptic form, ignoring the essential and original message of Jesus. It forces the whole into a scheme that is compounded of Jewish apocalypticism and the letter of the Old Testament, missing the higher prophetic message there as in the New Testament. And then by various methods of ingenuity and violence it seeks to evade the obvious conclusion that you cannot insist upon an imminent visible return on the ground of an infallible letter when plain history has disproven this infallibility. The more common method has been to ignore the unwelcome apocalyptic ideas, regarding simply the ethical-spiritual message of Jesus, or to spiritualize the sayings that would not otherwise fit in. Historical knowledge and a historical conscience will not longer

permit this. Over against this several considerations point out the attitude that we should take.

We note first the expressions of Jesus himself and the testimony of the gospel narratives. Jesus specifically disclaims omniscience as to the future, and particularly as to the program of coming Messianic events. "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only" (Matt. 24. 36). This word was one over which men very early stumbled, and undoubtedly it is for this reason that not a few manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel omit the phrase, "neither the Son." It is present, however, in the oldest manuscripts of Matthew and there is no question as to the parallel in Mark. Further, as we read the Gospels there is nothing to suggest that Jesus held other than the current ideas of his age in regard to matters of history, science, and the like. Why should this have been otherwise? Is not this involved in the church's doctrine of the humanity of our Lord, held unwaveringly, if not always clearly, throughout the ages? The sort of omniscience which some have attributed to Jesus would have made his life non-human and abnormal. The clear picture of the New Testament should have the right of way over men's theories of what ought to be. We need not wonder, then, that in the matter of time and even in that of manner, the outworking of events did not fulfill what was apparently the expectation of Jesus. He too here on earth walked by that faith which does not see all things but which does see God, and seeing him is content. Consistent with this is that indifference to detail, to calculations and programs, which we have noted and which marked his higher faith. Directly

expressive of this is the way in which from the beginning he faced first the possibility, then the certainty of his death, closing with that struggle in the garden in which the way before him still seemed dark, but in which his confidence in the Father and devotion to his will remained unshaken and triumphant.

What, then, is it that has made Jesus the revelation of God and the Lord and Saviour of men? What is it that we are to look for in a revelation? It is wrong thinking here that has led us astray and multiplied difficulties. We face the same question in connection with the Bible as a whole. Revelation is not the supernatural communication of a collection of facts and doctrines contained in an infallible book. It is God revealing himself in the living experience of men and through these to their fellows. Revelation is God showing himself, God giving himself. We have been making impossible demands of God and then failing to see his great gift. What is it that we need for the purposes of religion and life? Not infallible history, whether past or predicted, not infallible science nor details of doctrine; we need to know God: what he is, what manner of life we should lead as his children, and what we may expect from him. How will he help us to be his children here? What has he provided for men here, and beyond? These are the great questions, God and duty and hope, and they all find their answer in the first, in God himself.

Exactly this is what Jesus has brought to us, as, indeed, he brought it to those first disciples. "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," said one of these early followers (John 14. 8). "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" so another summarized the

meaning of Jesus for his faith (2 Cor. 5. 19). When we ask to-day concerning God there is but one answer that satisfies: the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the light of the knowledge of whose glory we have seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We have no higher need than that, and than that nothing higher can be said of Jesus. We want to know the way of life; we learn it to-day from the words of Jesus and from this self-same spirit in which we have found God's own life. We raise the question of hope: what may we expect of God? He gives us the answer again, whether we ask for forgiveness and fellowship with God, or the assurance of a new world here on earth, or the hope of a life beyond. And in all these things it is the spirit of Jesus even more than his speech that gives us light. It is, then, furthest from the truth to say that Jesus, because of the form of his hope, is "a stranger to our time and an enigma to our age." Rather must we say that as we read those ancient Gospels we forget the difference of speech and race and the long centuries that divide, and there stands before us in Jesus of Nazareth the Eternal Spirit with the ageless message of truth.

To sum up briefly: for the curious who demand a program of the future the Gospels bring little satisfaction. For the humble, earnest soul of faith they bring abundant answer. (1) Jesus shows us God, the ground of all trust, the source of all light for the hopes of men. (2) He shows us what the coming rule of God will mean, the sway of such a spirit as that which we see in Christ himself. (3) He gives us confidence that this rule will come. (4) He shows that God's rule means also judgment and summons us to repentance. (5) He calls us

to faith and service: to believe with joy in the coming rule, and to begin at once its life of loyalty and love and mercy and service, that we may be sons of our Father who is in heaven. And this message is as fresh and as valid and as needed in this century as in the first.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE

Apocalyptic Hopes

Let us turn first to the apocalyptic side of the early Christian hope. It seems quite clear that the expectation of the first disciples was not so vastly different from that of other Jews except for their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. They "hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel" (Luke 24. 21); they thought of him as one who would "restore the kingdom of Israel" (Acts 1. 6) They quarreled about places in the kingdom, about the seats next to the throne; "What then shall we have?" they asked. But wholly aside from more selfish ideas, their thought moved in the general apocalyptic lines. What death had prevented, Jesus was to accomplish very soon upon his return. Just how the first disciples conceived it in detail we do not know, but they did expect the coming of a new age, the overthrow of all forces of evil, the establishment immediately and by this deed of the kingdom of God.

What Paul's thought was we know more definitely, and there is no reason to suppose that he differed at any essential point from the rest of the church. He believed, first of all, that the visible return of Jesus and the dawn of the new age were very near; the ends of the ages were come upon them, the time was short, the day was at hand (Rom. 13. 12; 1 Cor. 1. 7; 7. 29–31; 10. 11; espe-

cially, 1 and 2 Thess.) Not all would die before his coming, he tells the Corinthians, and at first at least he counts himself among those who expect to see the return, though later recognizing the possibility of his death intervening (1 Cor. 15. 51; 2 Cor. 5. 8; Phil. 1. 23). The return of Jesus would mean the destruction of the powers of evil including death (1 Cor. 15. 25, 26), the resurrection of the dead, the judgment upon all men, good and evil, and the taking of the saints living and risen to be forever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17; Rom. 14. 10–12; 1 Cor. 4. 4, 5).

The contrast with the Jewish apocalypses should be noted here. There is no elaboration of events with Paul. Beyond the broad contrast of this age and the next, there is no scheme of epochs and ages. He offers little of detail, only a few vivid images taken from the Old Testament as found in the Thessalonian passages. About the only exception to this is the interesting statement about "the man of sin" and "that which restraineth," allusions that may have been clear to the Thessalonians, but about which we can but guess to-day; and the reference to these had a practical motive with Paul. Nor is there any reference to the idea of an intermediate kingdom. There is no premillennialism in Paul. He knows nothing of a temporary earthly rule upon which the eternal heavenly kingdom is to follow. A few commentators have thought that this was implied in 1 Cor. 15. 23, 24. They would insert it between the resurrection of the saints ("they that are Christ's, at his coming") and the final consummation ("Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God"). If Paul held such a view, it can hardly have meant much

to him, for he nowhere dwells upon it or makes it plain. As a matter of fact, this very passage points the other way. Paul does not refer to any intermediate reign of a thousand years of peace, but rather to the conflict, briefer or longer, in which the forces of evil are to be overcome. "For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." Then the rule is given over to the Father, "that God may be all in all." Paul's outlook is never upon an earthly kingdom, but always upon a heavenly one, one which "flesh and blood cannot inherit," but one to which the saints living and resurrected come with their spiritual bodies.

When all this is said, however, we must recognize fully the apocalyptic background of Paul's thought. This age stands over against the next, and the latter is to be ushered in by one great event, the coming of the Lord. The final transformation is to come thus suddenly. And the thought reaches down into all Paul's thinking. It is significant that Paul, even when he uses his great word salvation, commonly looks forward to the great day. "Now is salvation nearer to us than when we *first* believed. The night is far spent, and the day [of the Lord] is at hand" (Rom. 13. 11, 12).

The Contrast With Apocalypticism

So much for the apocalyptic side of the New Testament. A comparison of these writings with the Jewish apocalypses, however, shows a significant contrast; and the contrast is by no means simply this, that in the Christian hope Jesus holds the place as Messiah and deliverer. In both cases you find a future hope, but there the differences begin. In Jewish apocalypticism

there is aside from the future hope only an evil world, a distant God, a life without present joy or peace. The New Testament, on the contrary, breathes an atmosphere of peace and joy, is filled with a sense of the presence of God, and knows the conquering power of God now working in this world. And there is not one essential gift of the coming age which in measure is not now in the possession of the children of God. What we have is a new life, not in the future, but here and now, and one so rich and full that it is constantly breaking through the narrow limits of the apocalyptic scheme.

Let us begin here with the early church. Two notable events mark the experience of those first disciples, events without which that early history cannot be understood. One was the appearance of Jesus to his disciples. This revived their blighted hopes and held them together in confident waiting for his expected return. The other was the gift of the Holy Spirit, the experience of a new life which they knew to be the presence of God. The expectation of Jesus' return might have kept them hopefully waiting, but this experience of a salvation of God here and now not merely gave them the new spirit of joy and courage, but sent them forth to proclaim their good news and to establish the new Christian fellowship. Their theology was that of a future hope, their experience was that of a present life, and life in the end will remold the forms of thought. They retained the older form of hope, but the logic of life was bearing them on just as it did in the matter of the relation of Jew and Gentile (Acts 10. 44–48). It is significant that Acts 2 shows us Peter quoting the prophecies of Joel, always taken as referring to the new age ("in the last days"),

and claiming that they were fulfilled in the experiences of Pentecost.

Paul Transcends the Apocalyptic

The whole situation is made clear when we turn to Paul. We have seen his forward look, his apocalyptic hope, that the new age or heavenly kingdom was to come suddenly with the appearing of Jesus, and that it was this event which preeminently he called the Christian salvation. And yet it is Paul whose name is inseparably joined with the Christian doctrine of salvation not as an apocalpytic event, but as a present moral-spiritual experience. Over against the dark background of current apocalypticism without hope as regards this age, there stands this teaching of Paul filled with the thought of a great salvation that is here and now. It is not a matter of theory with Paul, nor is he concerned about the consistencies of logic. Paul speaks here of what he knows. But the highest treasures of the heavenly age are set forth in his words.

Let us consider in briefest outline what Paul holds as to the salvation that is available in the present age.

1. First comes forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God in Christ. He makes this the very summary of his gospel: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5. 19). And forgiveness is never something abstract and merely forensic with Paul; it is the power of a new life, a deliverance from sin: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 7. 25; 8. 1, 2). The gospel which he preaches is no mere future hope, it is a present power unto salvation (Rom. 1. 16).

2. This power of a new life is nothing less than the Spirit of God, the highest gift for which men looked in the new age (Jer. 31. 33; Joel 2. 28). And Paul did no higher service to the new faith than when he made clear that the Spirit of God was the spirit of a new life, of love and peace and righteousness—in one word, the spirit of Christ (Rom. 6 and 8). This transforming power of a new life is already present in the world.

3. That means the presence of Christ. It is this presence of Christ that makes a man a Christian, declares Paul. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "If any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature." And of himself Paul simply says, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Rom. 8. 9; 2 Cor. 5. 17; Gal. 2. 20). Christ, then, is no mere further hope for Paul; he is present in a real sense and as a transforming power.

4. All this means a living God present and working in his world. The gospel is not a mere proclamation as to the future, it is here and now "the power of God into salvation." Men need only believe it to know this power in their lives. The fellowship with the living God is a present possibility. It is fitting then, at the close of that great passage in which the apostle glories in the presence of the Spirit of God, that he should utter that cry of triumph, "We are more than conquerors; nothing shall separate us from the love of God." (Read Rom. 8.)

5. In all this it is plain how the apocalyptic framework is broken through. That Paul expected the end of the age very soon does not change the matter, nor that he looked forward to a great consummation. This age evil, that age good; this age the rule of the powers of

darkness, there the reign of God; here simply endurance and hope, there enjoyment: such is the essence of the apocalyptic scheme, and Paul has destroyed it. And the vital point at which Paul overcame this lies in his idea of salvation as essentially inner and spiritual and ethical, and so available for men now. Whatever he may add as to the consummation, the essential fact is that "the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," and that men may have all these here and now.

One or two other items need to be noted to bring out this side of Paul's thought. First, if the kingdom be moral and spiritual, if it be righteousness and peace and joy, then the kingdom is present just so far as these are present. That is clearly implied in Rom. 14. 17 and in 1 Cor. 4. 20. It is stated specifically in Col. 1. 13, 14, where Paul speaks of an accomplished fact: "who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." This too is not changed by the fact that most of Paul's references to the kingdom are eschatological. Second, we must note Paul's conception of the church here. It is this thought of a fellowship of the children of God that displaces in effect for Paul the phrase kingdom of God. Two things are to be said here about this church. (1) It is not so many scattered individuals, but a more or less mystical fellowship bodied forth in the Christian community. It is the body of Christ, indwelt by him, informed by him, having its life through his presence. (2) In this new creation is seen the purpose of God, taking the place of the old nationalistic ideal of the Jews. Here is the mystery of God's purpose, "to sum up all things in

Christ," and to "give him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 10, 22, 23). The apostle expects his people to be saved, but there is no word of the old national-political hope. On the contrary, he sees in the church the new and spiritual Israel. Here are Abraham's children; these are the heirs to the promises; for their sakes it is that the words were spoken of old. In this new and glorious community the national distinctions have been abolished, "there can be neither Jew nor Greek," and all, Jew and Gentile alike, because they are Christ's are "Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." The Jerusalem that is above is the mother of Christians, and these, and not the children of the Jerusalem of earth, are the free children and the heirs (Gal. 3. 26–29; 4. 26–31; Rom. 4. 9–25). And while the old temple and all things connected with it pass away, this fellowship, indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, is growing into a new and abiding "holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2. 19–22).

It is exceedingly instructive simply to read through Paul's letters and note the matters to which he gives largest attention, and the occasional passages in which he summarizes his message. It need hardly be said that with Paul, as with Jesus, the constant burden of the message is moral and spiritual. Repentance, faith, the life that God will give to men in his Spirit, the life that men are to live with God in trust and obedience and with men in the spirit of Christ—here is his constant theme. And the great summaries of his gospel bear out this thought: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" "We preach Christ crucified, the power of God

and the wisdom of God;" "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love" (2 Cor. 5. 19; 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24; Gal. 5. 6). Nothing will so surely obscure the real spirit of the great interpreter of Jesus as the piecemeal study of isolated passages undertaken with the assumption that all Paul's ideas must be crowded into a consistent theological system.

Summary and Conclusion

We may summarize our findings as to Paul as follows: Paul held the general apocalyptic framework, a common Jewish and early Christian possession. For him, as for the early Christians all, Christ and his return was the heart of the apocalyptic hope. At the same time there was another side of his thought of Christ, and this element grew for him in meaning and power. Christ was the reconciler of men to God, the spirit of a new life in men, the mediator of God's own Spirit and all God's gifts, and the bond of a new fellowship in which all divisions of race and class were overcome and in which a new family of God was being established in the earth. This is what Paul means when he speaks distinctively of his gospel, here is the distinctive Christian element of the new faith, and this is the message that grows in wonder and meaning as Paul sees its power illustrated in the widening circles of his world apostolate. Nor was this the least service that Paul wrought in the setting forth of these great truths. For when the apocalyptic hope faded, when the hope of a speedy visible return of Jesus was proven false by the historical event, the Christian Church moved on without disaster in the strength of that life and faith which Paul had done so much to set forth.

The Gospel of John

We have seen how in Paul there lie side by side the thoughts of salvation as an apocalyptic hope and as a present spiritual experience. As the years passed by and the ardent hope of an immediate return of Jesus to establish his kingdom was not realized, what attitude did the church take? We have not the material in the New Testament for any full reply, but there are two writings yet to be considered which throw light on this question, both of them, according to the common opinion of scholars, coming from around the close of the first century. Tradition has assigned these books to the same author, the apostle John, though dissent from this opinion appears very early in the church. It is not necessary to decide here whether John of the Apocalypse is the same as John the beloved disciple to whom the fourth Gospel has been commonly assigned. It is necessary, however, to consider each writing by itself, for the answers which they give to our question are clearly contrasted. One of these answers gives the apocalyptic side of early Christian belief, and that in its fullest and sharpest form, with far more of Jewish apocalypticism than appears anywhere else in the New Testament. The other drops the apocalyptic form almost altogether and lifts out the eternal and spiritual content of the gospel.

This last is the work of the fourth Gospel. It was Paul's great service to set forth the meaning of the new faith as a salvation which by grace through faith was open to all men now. At the same time there was as the constant background of Paul's hope the thought of a future apocalyptic consummation. In John the apoca-

lyptic framework has practically disappeared. There is an allusion to a return of Jesus, apparently in the old sense (John 21. 22), and once there is a reference to a general resurrection and judgment that lies in the future (5. 28, 29). But the interest of the book as a whole is not in the apocalyptic drama with its succession of events, with its salvation coming in great and future crises; rather it is in that which is spiritual and present and timeless. It is a great presentation, or interpretation, of the message and meaning of Jesus, and, with the great word of Paul, it has ruled the thought of the church through all these centuries. As we look at its idea of salvation we shall note that point by point it stands in contrast with the apocalyptic form of hope.

For John salvation is spiritual and ethical, not political and national. The thought of the kingdom of God, as we have seen, was common to Jew and to Christian as the expression of the future hope. It was the rule of God which was to bring the good of men. But the phrase was capable of many meanings. It might be the rule of a new life and spirit controlling men's will and affections. Often it was simply national and political, the rule of God being conceived as in effect the rule of Israel. Sometimes it was external, and the picture of a rule "with a rod of iron" had a fateful influence. Acts 1. 6 shows that the early disciples had not emancipated themselves from this more external conception. It may be that the desire to avoid this national-political element helps to explain the fact that the phrase "the kingdom," which appears in the synoptic Gospels one hundred and two times, is used by Paul only fourteen times, and in the fourth Gospel in but two passages (five

times). More significant is the fact that these two passages directly oppose the political and external conception of the Kingdom. "My kingdom is not of this world," says Jesus. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight; . . . . but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18. 36). A spiritual kingdom like this cannot, of course, be seen by the physical eye. "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And because it is a spiritual realm, only the spiritual enter it (3. 3, 5). For the most part, however, John uses other words to set forth the idea of salvation. While the Messianic kingdom is referred to as such but five times, the word "life" (in the sense of eternal life) is spoken of forty-four times. Eternal life, God's life in man, the life that means peace and joy and truth and freedom—this is the great gift and the great deliverance as seen by John. It is God dwelling in man, it is Christ in man, it is the life of sonship, it is light and love. It is in these terms of the spirit and of the inner life that the fourth Gospel brings us its lofty conception of the rule of God and the great deliverance.

In contrast again with the common apocalyptic conception, this salvation is not future but present. A spiritual salvation necessarily is spiritually conditioned. It does not wait upon some program of future events or the destruction of external forces; it depends upon man's response to God. The light has come into the world, and those who receive it may enter into the kingdom of light. It is contingent upon a present faith, not a future set of events—"he that believeth on him." And so John treats of this salvation in the present tense. The events of that dramatic program which

apocalypticism places in the future we find as present spiritual realities. Christ's return, resurrection, judgment, life, and death—all these are already present. "He that believeth . . . hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." Judgment is a present and continuous fact. "He that believeth not hath been judged already." The dead are already hearing the voice of God and living. Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and they who believe in him shall never die (5. 24; 3. 18; 5. 25; 11. 25, 26). The return of Jesus is also a present fact. The Jesus of the fourth Gospel is no absent Christ whose presence awaits a future, near or remote. Men are not to look for his coming; they are to abide in him. When we read, "I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you," the meaning is at once explained. It is a spiritual presence. "The world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me. . . . If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14. 18–23). In 14. 2 there is, it is true, another coming referred to; but this is equally removed from the apocalyptic idea. Jesus is not to return at some future date to prepare a new earth. The future home, we read, is one that is in the heavens. The many mansions in heaven here take the place of the new earth of chiliasm, and this is the purpose of the future coming, to take believers to this heavenly home. The conflict with the world of evil is likewise already won: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (16. 33).

The contrast with the apocalyptic scheme is equally clear when we consider the significance of Christ. The Messiah, as he appears in Jewish apocalypses and in

Christian chiliasm, is the leader of armies and the militant destroyer of his foes, some time to appear and win his victory and seat himself upon an earthly throne. The Jesus of John is the grace and power of the Eternal come into the life of time, dwelling in men and redeeming men. In multiplied discourses and varied pictures this truth is brought to us. Jesus is the word, the way, the truth, the light, the life, the bread of life, the water of life, the Good Shepherd, the door of the sheep, the vine. Elsewhere John puts it in one word: "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John 5. 11, 12). Throughout the Gospel the coming warrior King is displaced by the present spiritual Christ, and there is no word about any other salvation. Here comes the wonderful teaching about the disciple's mystical relation to Christ as given in chapters 14 to 17. The union with Christ, inner and intimate, becomes here the union with God, and the whole is inseparable from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God. And this is life in the supreme meaning of this Gospel. The gift of this life, eternal and abundant, was the great goal of Christ's coming (10. 11), and the fourth Gospel knows of no higher gift which any future age of earth has to bestow.

One other contrast will bring out the thorough-going difference between this Gospel and the apocalyptic outlook. At the heart of the latter is always the cleft between this age and the next. They stand against each other in sharpest opposition. This age means the rule of the powers of darkness, the hopelessness of all efforts to bring the good to triumph, the sway of injustice

and oppression, the absence of God and the increase of evil. The fourth Gospel too deals constantly in contrasts, as often has been pointed out. But in John the contrast of present and future has been overcome. What we see is two worlds standing over against each other. Both of them are present—life and death, light and darkness. The forces of evil are present in the world, but, as with Paul, they already have been overcome. Christ has overcome this world of evil (16. 33); death itself has been conquered (11. 25, 26). In him is life, and the life is here for all men. He is the Son, but to as many as receive him he gives the right to become the children of God (see John 1. 4, 12).

To summarize: In Paul the two conceptions of salvation lie side by side: on the one side the apocalyptic hope looking for some deed of God in the future, on the other the increasing realization of salvation as a present experience of personal salvation tangibly evident in the growing Christian fellowship. In the fourth Gospel the apocalyptic aspect passes out of sight. The field of vision is filled by the present spiritual salvation, the idea of life takes the place of the figure of the kingdom, and the heavenly home forms the close of the prospect of faith.

The Apocalypse of John

No book in the New Testament has been the subject of such widely varying estimates as the book of Revelation. It makes no claim to apostolic authorship; the writer simply refers to himself as "John, your brother," though early tradition ascribed it to the apostle. Its place in the canon was long a subject of dispute. Many of the earlier lists did not contain it, the reformers,

Luther and Zwingli, were inclined either to exclude it or to give it a secondary place, and Calvin's estimate is suggested by the fact that he wrote no commentary on it. The reasons for this are evident; it was obscure where Gospel and epistles were plain, it was too strongly stamped with that chiliasm which the church had repudiated, its spirit was not a clear reflection of that of the Gospel. Nor were these scholars impressed with the sweeping claims and severe threats with which the book closed; significantly they all gave more authority to Paul with his more modest assumptions (compare Rev. 22. 18, 19 with 1 Cor. 7. 12, 25, 40). The use made of the book by the rank and file of the church has varied greatly. Many have simply passed it by as a set of incomprehensible puzzles, using at most the opening chapters with their searching messages to the churches, or the wonderful pictures of the triumph of the saints beyond. Others have made it almost if not quite the book of supreme value, as the one writing which gave to men the outline of future history, undisturbed by the fact that no two of them interpreted the pictures and read the history in the same fashion. Still others have used the book in "spiritual" fashion, taking from it such lessons as they found for themselves, or else have read these wonderful scenes for the quickening of religious imagination and the strengthening of faith.

The first requirement for the understanding of the book is to recognize that it belongs to a distinct class of writings, the apocalypses. In the three centuries preceding this time these writings had been largely produced among the Jews, and had had a large influence upon the young church. The longer apocalyptic passages

of the Gospels probably contain some materials from these sources. In Jude we have two distinct references to apocalyptic writers. The statement of verse nine, according to several early church fathers, is from the Assumption of Moses, while verses 14 and 15 give a direct quotation from Enoch. This regard for the Jewish apocalypses, particularly in certain Christian circles, is further indicated by the fact that after the Jews had turned away from such hopes it was among Christians that these writings were preserved and so handed down to us. The book of Revelation is the outstanding illustration of this interest. It must, therefore, be studied and understood as an apocalyptic writing.

Apocalyptic writings, as we have seen, spring from times of evil and usually of oppression, when faith needs encouragement and the only possible deliverance seems to be through an intervention from heaven. The book of Revelation arose under such conditions, whether we place it in the time of Nero or, as is more generally agreed, in that of Domitian. In the swiftly spreading brotherhood of this new religion Rome had begun to feel a source of danger. This was aggravated by the refusal of the Christians to join in the new cult of emperor worship. Ordinarily most tolerant in matters of religion as of local government, Rome was deeply concerned in anything that affected the unity of her vast and heterogeneous domain. The emperor cult was a symbol of this unity, political rather than religious in its interest, and the same interest caused her to be extremely suspicious of all extended forms of association. The emperor worship and the persecution of the Christians were both especially pronounced in Asia Minor from

which this writing springs. It is not necessary to suppose that many Christians already had been slain; but the threatening danger was present, and they saw the seemingly irresistible power of the empire moving to their destruction. The situation had changed radically from the day of Paul, who saw in Rome the restraining power over against his foes, and the great keeper of peace along whose highways he could bear the gospel. Now it was like the Satanic power of an Antiochus Epiphanes in that earlier crisis which had threatened to overwhelm the Jewish faith and which called forth the book of Daniel.

Like other apocalyptic writers, the first purpose of John of Patmos was to strengthen the faith of the Christians, to make them see that God still ruled, that God had not deserted them, and that deliverance was at hand. There is, however, in this greatest of apocalypses a prophetic and a Christian note that is not found elsewhere. That is made most clear in the first three chapters, though it is not wanting elsewhere. It is the moral summons, the call to be faithful in life, to let no danger bring any yielding to idolatrous worship and to let no seduction of pagan laxity draw them away from the holiness of Christian life.

The method by which the writer serves his purpose is distinctly apocalyptic. It is by means of a series of visions, with elaborate scenes and symbols, the detailed meaning of which is to-day largely hidden, though probably known to his first readers. In these visions he portrays the events that are about to happen, and, like all apocalyptists, he declares most positively that they are to occur in the near future: "And the angel . . . lifted up his right hand to heaven, and sware by him that

liveth for ever and ever, . . . that there shall be delay no longer" (Rev. 10. 5, 6; see also 1. 1, 3; 3. 22; 22. 10–12). There are certain elements in particular which stand forth in these visions: (1) the majesty and power of God as seen in the visions of heaven; (2) the approaching events of tribulation and judgment vividly set forth in many different pictures and occupying the larger portion of the writing, including the war in heaven and the destruction of Rome; (3) the deliverance of the saints and the final glories of the heavenly abode.

The real purpose of the book is discernible when one begins to outline the order of events. The fact is, with all the appearance of definite chronological order, it is impossible to find a consistent and consecutive development. This may be due in part to the sources which the writer uses, borrowing from Jewish apocalyptic and adapting to his ends. But in any case it shows the purpose of the author. His primary purpose is not predictive but practical. His constant desire is to strengthen faith, to encourage the faint, to hold men true. Therefore he turns again and again to the theme of the sure judgment that is to fall upon the evil. Similarly, the deliverance of the saints is portrayed repeatedly, inserted in these pictures of the coming distress. Drawing alike from Old Testament and the later Jewish apocalypses, using his material with freedom and with power, John adds scene to scene of his wonderful pictures to bring home his message of assurance and comfort. This comparative indifference to system and order is indicated, for example, by the merely passing reference made to the intermediate kingdom about whose character he has practically nothing to say.

There is, however, a broad outline of events that lies back of this book: evil is at hand and is increasing; there is coming a period of terrible tribulation, but the saints will be delivered; a conflict with the forces of evil will end in their overthrow and the destruction of Rome; the faithful martyrs will be raised from the dead to rule with Christ in the kingdom of his saints for a thousand years; then shall come the final assault of the powers of evil and their destruction, followed by the general resurrection, the Judgment, and the award of good and evil in the new heaven and the new earth. The peculiar feature in this so far as the New Testament is concerned is the reference to the intermediate kingdom of a thousand years, and the interesting fact in this connection is that aside from the living saints only a limited class of Christians are raised to share in this realm. These are the martyrs of this Roman persecution. While perhaps not limited to those who had been beheaded "for the testimony of Jesus," it clearly included only those who had refused to join in the emperor worship, "such as worshiped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and their hand" (Rev. 20. 4; compare 6. 9; 11.7; 13. 15). Only a very small proportion thus of the saints who have died are raised for this intermediate kingdom.

The Christian hope as it appears in this writing is distinctly apocalyptic. The spiritual forces of evil control this world and Rome itself is but an embodiment of these. This age is drawing to its close. The trials already suffered by the saints are but the beginning of more terrible tribulations. What, then, is the apocalyptist's hope? Not that Rome will cease her persecution,

not that Christianity will spread and so change conditions; the only hope is the destruction of the old order and the bringing in of the new age by interposition from heaven. In all this the saints have no active task, whether evangelistic or militant; it is theirs to endure and to be faithful and to see the deed of God.

The use that has been made of the book of Revelation has repelled many people. The history of its interpretation is a very museum of curiosities. Its apocalypticism no longer commends it to thoughtful men, and the hope of the Christian Church looks forward to a different manner of salvation. But the book served its purpose in that early day of trial and has a value for our own. We read its opening chapters and their searching words reach the conscience with a truly Christian message. Our hearts answer to those pictures that set forth the lofty faith of this seer in the might of the eternal God whose sure purposes were moving on to their consummation. And those pictures of the heavenly abode of the saints in light, how their pure and lofty imagery quickens the imagination and stirs the heart, and to how many hearts of sorrow have they brought calm and strength!

"Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 7. 15–17).

CHAPTER V

PREMILLENNIALISM IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

THERE is neither space nor need in this discussion for a comprehensive history of chiliastic opinion in the Christian Church. A brief survey, however, will further our understanding of modern premillennialism. For convenience, four periods may be distinguished.

THE EARLY CHURCH

The early church before Augustine in its popular thinking was largely apocalyptic. An early return of Jesus was expected to establish his kingdom. We have seen that the Jewish apocalyptic writings had currency in the early church, and that one New Testament author, Jude, refers to one such writing and quotes by name from another. This apocalyptic thought was generally premillennial; it was a temporary kingdom upon earth that was to be established. That this thought was uncritical is indicated by the currency of the Jewish writings in the church which were interpreted in a Christian way and sometimes suffered Christian interpolation. There was apparently no attempt to reduce it to systematic form. It was a hope that was real and vivid, but aside from its broad outline the form seemed a matter of relative indifference. From the beginning apparently the theology of the church and her creeds was untouched by this doctrine. As the fourth Gospel shows, the more thoughtful minds early passed beyond these conceptions.

One passage suggestive of this situation has come down to us from Papias, a church father who died about the middle of the second century. It indicates both the uncritical character of this chiliastic thought and its tendency toward the material. Papias quotes words that are taken from the Apocalypse of Baruch, but ascribes them to Jesus. He says that "the Lord taught in regard to those times, and said: 'The days will come in which vines shall grow, having each ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in every one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me. In like manner, He said that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear would have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds of clear, pure fine flour.' " And so forth.

From Augustine Onward

A second stage begins with Augustine. During this period chiliasm is rejected by the church and persists only here and there in special circles. Various reasons account for the change. (1) The external situation of the church was wholly different. John saw no hope for deliverance from threatened destruction except the annihilation of Rome by power from heaven in connection with the return of Christ. Now the threat was removed, Rome was favorable, and the church had free scope. (2) The materialistic and Judaistic side of pre-

millennialism had repelled the church, as had the character of certain movements like Montanism which were strongly chiliastic. (3) The thought of the church as represented in its great leaders and as crystallized in its creeds had rested upon a wholly different position and concerned itself with other interests. This ordered thought occupied now a larger and more commanding position in the church and premillennialism had no place in it. (4) A similar result followed from the development of the church as an institution, and the whole doctrine of salvation as connected with the church and her sacraments. The salvation which concerned men now was not a world renewal wrought by divine interposition; it was a gift that the church held in her hands in this life, and beyond this life was simply the judgment and the future award. Under Augustine's leadership the church came to consider herself as the kingdom of God on earth and thus supplanted the millennial hope.

The Reformation Period

Outwardly at least the Protestant Reformation made no change in this. While some of the reformers thought that the end of the world was near, premillennialism itself was repudiated as a Jewish hope. Luther and Calvin both had too much of historic sense and the historic view of the Scriptures for them simply to accept Jewish opinions as held by the second-century church or to transfer literally the political hopes of the Old Testament into Christian theology. Luther, especially at first, had a distinctly depreciatory opinion of Revelation, while Zwingli and Oecolampadius definitely rejected it.

In this they were simply reviving the position taken by leaders of the Eastern church in the old discussion in connection with the formation of the canon. Calvin's opinion of premillennialism is emphatically suggested in the Institutes (III. XXV. 5): "Shortly after the Chiliasts arose, who limited the reign of Christ to a thousand years. This fiction is too puerile to need or to deserve refutation."

The doctrine of salvation with the reformers was dominantly individual. The larger hope of the kingdom of God as a new order appears neither in its apocalyptic form nor in its later missionary-social conception. The apocalyptic elements of the New Testament they passed by. The missionary task they did not recognize, nor acknowledge the social implications of the Gospel. Their great concern was with the personal and present salvation as an individual experience which was contained in the writings of Paul and John.

And yet the Reformation did bring a revival of premillennialism. It appeared in certain minor and more radical movements like the Anabaptists, movements which must not be condemned because of the instance of the Muenster fanatics. There was much of moral earnestness and spiritual passion here. These men felt that the reformers were not sufficiently radical. Over against the more middle-class and aristocratic Lutheran movement they were decidedly democratic, and so emphasized the social application of religion. There was also an emphasis upon special inspiration such as revived one aspect of primitive Christianity. With this went a strong tendency to biblical literalism as the only rule for doctrine and practice. These elements explain the

revival of premillennialism, especially the biblical literalism and the social emphasis.

The Modern Movement and Its Sources

The nineteenth century brought a revival of premillennialism which was due historically to various influences. Of these two principal ones can be pointed out here. The first was the literalistic conception and use of the Bible. The Protestant leaders had appealed from ecclesiastical authority to the Bible, but it was to the Bible as bearing the Gospel. The test of a book for Luther was the way in which it presented Christ, and in applying that test he put some writings definitely above others. It was a later generation that set up the authority of the letter. Under this influence a mild type of apocalypticism arose, especially in pietistic circles and under the influence of Bengel. It was felt necessary to find a place and meaning for the millennial passage of Revelation 20. Bengel himself indulged in a good deal of apocalyptic calculation and speculation. He made predictions as to the future of Christianity, Mohammedanism, and papacy, as to political events and the like. He calculated the end of the present age and set the date at 1836. In the main, however, his writings were of a most helpful and wholesome character and because of this and his devout personal life he wielded a very large influence. He was not, however, a premillennialist, least of all after the modern pattern. He believed in two millennia, not one. He denied a reign of Christ on earth with his saints, or any visible political kingdom of Christ whatever, protesting against "the Judaizing and fleshly meanings" of the thousand years.

He looked forward to a period of prosperity for the church, this to be during the first millennium when Satan would be bound. He expected the conversion of the nations and of the Jews by the preaching of the Gospel. Following this would come the second millennium during which the martyred saints (not all saints) would be raised and rule with Christ in heaven. But neither the beginning nor the end of either the first or the second millennium, he declares, would be known to men on earth. (On all this see his *Erklaerte Offenbarung Johannis*, comment on chapter 20). But while Bengel was not a premillennialist, his example encouraged apocalyptic studies and later premillennial speculations. As late as the first half of the nineteenth century a mild chiliasm was felt in certain theological circles of Germany, an example of which is Hengstenberg, who found in the revolutionary turmoils of 1848 the beginnings of the final conflict of Gog and Magog, in this case, as he put it, exemplified by Demagog.

These influences worked within the larger church bodies like Lutheranism, though without ever dominating the real thought of the church. A different influence was that working outside the great churches and appearing in the smaller separatist groups. These were the modern successors of the more radical circles of the Reformation period. In the first half of the nineteenth century there appeared in England the Irvingites and Plymouth Brethren, in this country the Adventists under Miller. Other movements appeared later: Mormonism, Dowieism, and Millennial Dawnism, and suggest, in connection with the first named, what wide differences there were among these groups. Common to them all

is the thought of a millennial kingdom to be established upon earth in some special manner. Certain other elements constantly recur, though not always present in any one instance: a verbal theory of inspiration, a frequent recourse to type and allegory, an emphasis on special gifts of the Spirit and often on special revelations, and the sharp criticism of the established churches and opposition to them. The emphasis upon a biblical and legalistic literalism is often joined with an attempt to reproduce primitive Christianity. From this source come the revival of practices like feet-washing and healings, the observance of the seventh day, the avoidance of pork, and so forth.

Our historical study has shown us the roots of modern premillennialism as these reach into the distant past, as well as the more recent movements upon which it is dependent. A brief summary of these historical conclusions is desirable before we consider modern premillennialism itself and its claim to represent the truest interpretation of Christianity.

1. In its fundamental point of view as a theology and as a program of salvation, modern premillennialism represents Jewish apocalypticism. It despairs of this age and looks to some sudden and unexpected deed of omnipotence to overthrow the old, and establish a new world. It has the same extreme emphasis upon divine sovereignty and the same fatalistic conception of world history.

2. The details of its system, especially of its conception of the millennial kingdom, it gets from the Old Testament through a doctrine of biblical literalism according to which every Jewish hope contained in the older Scriptures must be literally realized in the new day.

3. The order of its program, with its intermediate kingdom, it gets from the Jewish apocalypses through one passage in Revelation.

4. In its spirit and in its special ideas modern undenominational premillennialism has been strongly influenced by certain of the separatist movements of the last century, and particularly by the Plymouth Brethren. That is seen at such points as its teaching of the twofold return of Christ, and its extreme critical and condemnatory attitude toward the church.

The Contrast of Old and New

It is important, as we turn to a detailed study of modern premillennialism, that we shall not only recognize how it is connected with the past, but also the peculiar character which it has to-day. The change that has taken place will appear if we contrast this modern movement with the chiliastic hopes that were held in many parts of the church in the first two centuries. The early Christians lived in a hostile world, governed by forces that were always frankly pagan and sometimes threatened their very existence. They saw no hope for deliverance except by the destruction of the whole world-order. They believed that the age was near its end. In the midst of this darkness they felt that the Lord would speedily return and deliver them. They had no plans for the future because they did not expect any future. They had not worked out any system of doctrine in the matter. It was probably quite true, as Professor F. C. Porter has suggested, that Jewish apocalypticism never belonged to the schools, but was a laymen's theology; certainly that seems to have

been the case with apocalypticism in the early church.

Modern premillennialism faces a radically changed situation. It has to deal with the fact that nineteen centuries have passed, that several score generations have come and gone since that early day. It cannot ignore the fact that there is such a thing as a long Christian history for which some sort of meaning must be found. And unless it turns again to discredited calculations and fixing of dates, it must realize that there may still be long centuries and even millennia ahead of us here in this earth. The time is past when it can merely quote a passage and voice a hope. And so modern chiliasm differs radically from the simple and unreflective hope of that early day. It is no mere expectation of the speedy second coming of Christ. It is no mere teaching as to the order of certain events. It has of necessity become an elaborate system of doctrine, a complete outline of theology. It is an interpretation of Christianity claiming to give alone its true meaning. In Judaism and early Christianity these hopes were expressed with a certain freedom, marked with feeling and imagination, with no suggestion of logic and system. Modern premillennialism has become scholastic system, with rigid forms of thought and endless elaboration of doctrine.

Premillennialism in Christian Theology and Creed

It is one of the ironies of the modern situation that in certain circles premillennialism wins adherents by a denunciation of its opponents as heretics and rationalists, joined to vigorous claims of orthodoxy for itself.

It is worth while, therefore, to look over the history of Christian thought from this standpoint.

First of all as regards Christian theology, almost from the beginning those who have shaped the thinking of the church that has expressed itself either in creed or in theological system have been opposed to this doctrine, or have simply left it to one side. It would be hard to find in the world of scholarship to-day a recognized theologian or biblical student of the first rank who stands on this side. Significant of the present-day situation is the statement made by Professor J. H. Snowden (The Coming of the Lord, p. 32), that as a result of investigation of the theological seminaries of eight denominations in this country he found but eight premillennialists among two hundred and thirty-six members of faculties. The premillennialist does not aid his cause by the frequent denunciation of schools and scholars with which this situation is often met.

Equally suggestive is a study of the great symbols in which the church has expressed her faith. The Apostles' Creed seems clearly to exclude premillennialism by its phrase, "from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." The Nicene Creed is a little more explicit: "He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end." The Athanasian Creed joins unmistakably a general resurrection and final Judgment with his return: "From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; and shall give account for their own works. And they that are good shall go into life everlasting. and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

The situation is no different with the great Protestant confessions. Calvin's position has been indicated by a quotation from the Institutes. Luther's position is given in Koestlin's authoritative work on his theology (Theologie Martin Luther's, II. 574). He speaks of "the inward and spiritual nature of his view of Christian salvation, in consequence of which the theory that this earth is yet to become the scene of an outwardly victorious kingdom of Christ had no attraction for him." Luther, he declares, rejected the doctrines of the chiliasts absolutely. The Augsburg Confession, XVII, reads, "They condemn others also who now scatter Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being everywhere suppressed." The Helvetic Confession, XI, 14, says: "We condemn the Jewish dreams, that before the day of judgment there shall be a golden age upon earth, and that the pious shall possess the kingdoms of the world, their wicked foes being held in subjection." The Westminster Confession directly excludes premillennialism by declaring that there shall be one judgment day, in which "all persons, that have lived upon the earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give account of their thoughts, words, and deeds: and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil." The Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church indicate the position taken by affirming the Athanasian Creed.

PART II
MODERN PREMILLENNIALISM

CHAPTER VI

THE PREMILLENNIAL DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM AND ITS COMING

Premillennialism a Doctrine of Salvation

Premillennialism is not merely a special teaching as to the order of events in connection with the end of the world. Its adherents often begin their discussion by dividing all Christians into premillennialists and postmillennialists. All of them, they declare, believe in a millennium; the latter declare that Jesus is to return after the millennium has been established, the former holding that the millennium will appear when Jesus comes to set it up. This statement is as far from showing the real situation as is the popular impression that Adventism simply means that the world is about to come to an end. Modern premillennialism as exhibited in the movement described in the Introduction is a complete theological system. It is not one doctrine but a whole outline of theology. It involves a very definite conception of God and of his relation to the world, of man and his nature, of the Bible and its use in theology, of God's method with his world and of his present and final purpose.

The central interest of premillennialism, however, is its doctrine of salvation. With the doctrine it seeks to answer the old question of the problem of evil: How can we believe in a good God in this world where evil seems to reign? In answer to that it tells why the world is evil and how the good is to come. Like the old apoca-

lypticism which is its real source, it gives a philosophy of history and a theory of salvation. This doctrine of salvation is the very heart of premillennialism and will form the subject of this chapter. The general scheme can be stated briefly in three points. (1) The philosophy of history: A sovereign Power has marked out the plan for this age, as for all ages. The world in this age is hopeless. Its ruler is Satan, it is dominated by evil, it is destined to grow worse. No forces now at work (church, gospel, Spirit of God) can save it. (2) The old order will be destroyed and a new order established when Jesus appears in visible form and at the head of armed forces, at which time he will destroy some of his enemies, subject others, and assume his position as ruler of earth. (3) For a thousand years Jesus is to reign at Jerusalem as the head of a Jewish world empire, his saints ruling under him, the restored Jewish nation of which he is the king holding a position of supremacy, and all evil being suppressed. In this chapter there will be considered the theory here indicated as to the meaning of the present age, the doctrine of the world's salvation, and the nature of the coming kingdom.

Premillennial Pessimism

If a single word be taken to express the premillennial teaching as to the present age, that word would be "pessimism." The word cannot, of course, be rightly applied to premillennialism as a whole; its central thought is the idea of coming salvation, it builds upon the hope of a final triumph of the good. But so far as this age is concerned pessimism describes correctly its position. That is seen both in its judgment upon the present age

as incurably evil, and, secondly, in its despair as to the power of moral and spiritual forces to effect any change. The prophet in all ages has been quick to see evil and courageous in its condemnation, nor has he ever minimized its power. He has refused to cry, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace. But premillennial pessimism is not a mark of moral discernment or especial sensitiveness to sin. It is purely a dogmatic position. The first requirement of the premillennial scheme is the utter hopelessness of the present situation. The whole theory falls to the ground unless one holds that the world is evil and is constantly growing worse. "If we are mistaken as to the presence of a 'religious falling away,' then all hope and arguments of premillennialism dissolve in thin air,"[1] confesses one writer.

It is no wonder then that the pages of these writers are filled with pictures of the blackest hue. There is no effort at a moral estimate of the world, and moral discrimination is quite lacking. The matter is as superficial as the optimism which they so often condemn. A recent writer, for example, calls his volume Behold the Morning, and then takes over a third of its space for a catalog of evils of every kind, quoting at length with apparent satisfaction the opinion that "the entire race will be insane in a few centuries" (p. 27). One looks through these pages in vain for any real recognition of the forces of good that are at work. The references to temperance reform, philanthropy, social legislation, or humanitarian movements of any kind are uniformly critical, depreciatory, or simply scornful. The possi-

[1] Wimberly, Behold the Morning, p. 71; compare Prophetic Studies, p. 166.

bility of any Christian element in our civilization is scoffed at. "Our civilization was conceived in sin and born in iniquity. In Genesis 3 we have its conception, and in Genesis 4 its birth. Civilization took form when Cain, the rationalist and fratricide, 'went out from the presence of the Lord . . . and builded a city.' "[2]

As a matter of fact, the whole question for chiliasm is not one of what is, but of what must be. It rests back finally upon an ultra-Calvinistic conception of divine sovereignty. The world is evil and is growing worse because God has determined this as his plan. That plan is revealed in the Bible, and it is ours not to debate it but to accept it. God has said in the Bible that the world is to grow worse, and that decides it. The world itself is not now under God's control. "Satan is the arch enemy of God, and the world in this present evil age is in his power."[3] Since God has determined this as the course of events, we must not speak of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit as a failure. If God had wished to save the world in this age (instead of only a limited number, the elect), then it would have come to pass.[4] Quite consistently the writer just quoted adds that it is a mistake to preach the gospel of the kingdom in this age or to pray for its extension. It is ours simply to ask God to "accomplish the number of (his) elect."

We come then to the peculiar situation that for premillennialism hopelessness becomes a mark of faith, and the discovery of evil a ground of encouragement. Paul's

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[2] Christian Workers Magazine, September, 1918.

[3] Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, p. 143.

[4] Christian Workers Magazine, 1917, p. 278; compare Brookes, The Lord Cometh, pp. 317, 377.

word is reversed and we are summoned to rejoice over unrighteousness instead of with the truth, and by no means to believe all things or hope all things. It becomes a necessity to put the darkest construction upon all things as a support to this (assumed) divine plan. Dr. Nathanael West calls for a "treatise with full statistics of the Devil's missions" in order to "set the word of God in its true light."[5] And this strange situation makes possible the words of Dr. R. A. Torrey written during the war: "As awful as conditions are across the water to-day, and as awful as they may become in our own country, the darker the night gets the lighter my heart gets."[6] That is why premillennialism flourishes in times of greater distress (witness the late war), and why progress of the good is the severest blow to the theory.

But premillennialism is something more than a belief in the power of evil and a despair as to the present age. It means despair as to the power of spiritual forces to redeem this world: in other words, moral pessimism. Consider what those forces of redemption are upon which thoughtful Christian men rely to-day. We believe in the power of the truth, coming to us supremely in the gospel and showing us the will of God and the true life of man. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the living God dwelling in his world and working in the life of men. We believe that this life of God in man is showing itself in love and service, in the passion for righteousness and the spirit of brotherhood. We believe that these forces are working, and will work, through the organized life

[5] The Thousand Years, p. 449.

[6] Christian Workers Magazine, 1917, p. 554.

of mankind in industry, in the state, and especially through the Church of Christ. But always our fundamental confidence is in the power of the truth as given in the gospel, and the power of the Spirit of God in human life. Upon these spiritual forces we rely.

Premillennialism declares that these spiritual forces cannot, or at least will not, save the world in this age or in any other. The failure of these forces is already apparent. "There is not a nation, or a country, or a parish, or a long-established congregation, where the devil has not more subjects than Christ."[7] "If there were not some way beside the present religious propaganda for bringing in the kingdom of God, I could not believe in a scheme that has failed as this has and is certainly failing."[8] The church is constantly depicted in blackest colors, and W. E. Blackstone is mild in comparison with some others when he suggests that "it is almost ready to be spued out of the Master's mouth."[9]

As to the state, not only are there no Christian nations but there can be none.[10] As for the idea of a social Christianity, a spirit of righteousness leavening or molding society, that is absolutely rejected. "The uplift of society as a whole is a perversion of gospel salvation, which is purely individualistic."[11] The leavening power of evil is insisted upon as strongly as the same power is denied to the good.

Here again the position is strictly dogmatic. It is

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[7] Ryle, Second Coming, p. 40.
[8] Wimberly, Behold the Morning, p. 210.
[9] Jesus is Coming, p. 95.
[10] Christian Workers Magazine, 1917, p. 277.
[11] Ibid., XVI, 396.

not that these forces have not saved the world; they cannot. It is the old apocalyptic idea of a history that has been mapped out in advance, with its program of epochs and events. The program for this age includes simply the saving of a number of the elect out of the wreck of the world. The work of the church and the effect of the gospel are strictly limited to this. The church that assumes to convert the world to Christ "proposes to itself a plan which already the mouth of God has declared to be false."[12] The gospel "shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all nations;" this is the passage constantly cited, and always we are told that it does not mean converting or Christianizing the world. One looks in vain for any explanation of Matt. 28. 19, 20, where the command is to "make disciples of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." In brief, God has no intention of saving the world by spiritual means. The kingdom will not come, says A. C. Gaebelein flatly, in a spiritual way.[13]

Premillennial Militarism

What, then, are the forces to which premillennialism appeals in its hope of a new world? It must be answered, the physical and external. It is essentially a militaristic scheme of salvation. What other alternative is there? There are only two forces available in the world. The one is ethical and spiritual, God's Spirit appealing by the truth and working through the mind and heart of man. The other is external and physical. There is

[12] West, The Thousand Years, p. 279. [13] Harmony, p. 186.

no third. Chiliasm definitely repudiates the former. It takes the highest spiritual forces that Christianity knows, and says positively that these cannot save the world. There is nothing left to it but the physical, and to this specifically it appeals. True, it claims to appeal to Christ, through whose second coming the kingdom is to be established. But this is not the Christ whom the church through all the ages has preached to men as their Saviour. It is not the Jesus of Nazareth revealed in the Gospels, the teacher of truth, the bearer of love and grace. It is, rather, an Oriental monarch, a vengeful militaristic chief. The Jewish ideal at its lowest, repudiated by Jesus, is here made the final hope of mankind.

What we have indicated, millennial writers frankly avow. "Whenever the kingdom of heaven is set up over this world, it will be through miraculous power,"[14] declares Dr. C. I. Scofield. "Only suppose God to act irresistibly, and the thing is done,"[15] says J. F. Silver. The author quotes here as Wesley's opinion an idea which Wesley propounded only to repudiate. There is no moral qualification here, no question of man's response to the appeal of God; it is a matter of sheer omnipotence, of bald sovereignty. So J. H. Brookes says plainly as to the salvation of the Jews, that while "their dispersion is conditional, made to depend upon their obedience, . . . their restoration is unconditional, made to depend upon his sovereign grace and unchangeable purpose."[16] So evil is to be overcome by the same irresistible power. "The fundamental idea of a reign, according to God, is the

[14] The Coming and Kingdom of Christ, p. 114.
[15] The Lord's Return, p. 35.
[16] The Lord Cometh, p. 397.

repression of evil."[17] "Not a single prophecy can be adduced which predicts the conversion of the world by the gradual diffusion of the gospel," says Brookes. His conception of the method of making a new world is seen by the quotations to which he appeals, all of which naturally are to be taken in the strict literalness insisted upon by this school. The better age is to come "with dreadful judgments." "The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies." "By fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh." "And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Special attention is called to the slaughter so terrible that the armor taken from the battlefield will supply fuel for seven years."[18] "The rectifying which comes at last is not by mercy but by judgment—not by an extension of the gospel, the labor of ministers, or any gracious instrumentality whatsoever now at work."[19] "The progress of Christianity is the progress of a Mighty Prince. . . . The conversion of the 'people' is to be accomplished by the 'declaration of his mighty acts.' The presence of Christ is that alone which can secure the victory. It is quite unwarrantable to explain this by saying that the blessing is to be wrought out by the pacific doctrine and institutions with which Christ endowed the church eighteen centuries ago."[20]

[17] J. M. Gray, Mountain Peaks of Prophecy, p. 53.

[18] The Lord Cometh, pp. 287–99, passim.

[19] McNeile, quoted by Brown, Second Advent, p. 328.

[20] West, The Thousand Years, p. 455; see various writers, as cited by Brown, The Second Advent, pp. 313–318.

Few writers are quite so frank or brutal as I. M. Haldeman, whose work on The Coming of Christ is distributed by the Bible House of Los Angeles for propaganda purposes. He translates this millennial militarism into a picture of the returning Christ coming as a great military leader, striking down his enemies and killing them with the sword as men of war have always done, with "the eyes of one who is aroused and indignant, in whose veins beats the pulse of a hot anger. . . . He comes forth as one who no longer seeks either friendship or love. . . . His garments are dipped in blood, the blood of others. He descends that he may shed the blood of men. . . . He will enunciate his claim by terror and might. He will write it in the blood of his foes. He comes like the treader of the winepress, and the grapes are the bodies of men. He will tread and trample in his fury till the blood of men shall fill the earth. . . . He will tread and trample them beneath his accusing feet, till their up-spurting blood shall make him crimson. . . . He comes to his glory not as the Saviour meek and lowly, not through the suffrage of willing hearts and the plaudits of a welcoming world, but as a king, an autocrat, a despot, through the gushing blood of a trampled world. And those who follow this emergent, wrathful King of Heaven . . . are represented as armies. They come forth as a body of fighters. They come forth to assist the Warrior to make war on the earth. In this way the kingdom is to come, not by the preaching of the Gospel and the all-persuasive power of the Spirit of God."[21]

This is the gospel of militarism proclaimed by millennialism as the world's hope over against the gospel of

[21] Haldeman, Chapter XVII.

grace. And this it offers, at the close of the world's most terrible war, to a world weary of the sword and needing above all else the good news of the cross, not only as the wisdom but as the power of God. It has surrendered all hope that this world may be saved by grace and truth and love. Its sole appeal now is to force.

And here millennialism faces a dilemma which it has never solved. Is this force purely destructive, or can it really save men? Force can easily enough destroy, that is clear, and millennialism can picture plainly enough a supernatural War Lord destroying his opponents. But is that all? If so, then millennialism has not solved the problem of the world's salvation but has simply given it up. But if not, the harder question remains: How can mere force create righteousness? How can the physical create the spiritual? For we must remember the insistent statement that it is not spiritually, not by the gospel of grace or any other agency now at work, that the kingdom of righteousness is to be established. The Jews, of course, are to be converted; that is settled and without condition. The only answer is the recourse to an idea of divine sovereignty that out-Calvins Calvin. Brookes asserts this. The whole matter rests upon God's "sovereign grace and unchangeable purpose." Of course, there will be repentance and holiness, but there is no question as to these since the same sovereign power will supply faith, repentance, and holiness together with the restoration of their land.[22] J. M. Gray in his Text-Book on Prophecy (p. 124) also makes the effort to show how physical force can lead to a spiritual salvation. He quotes approvingly the words of another: "The

[22] The Lord Cometh, pp. 396, 397.

judgments which accompany the Lord's return will have purged out the obstinately wicked of that generation, while the survivors, awed by those judgments, and compelled to bow to the scepter of Christ, will, by this universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, be generally turned in heart to the Lord." This is remarkable theology for a Christian thinker. Protestant evangelical thought has always joined the gift of God's Spirit with the hearing of the word of the gospel and the answer of penitence and faith. If we leave this, we have only the magic of sacramentarianism and the paganism that relies on force. Dean Gray has no word here about a gospel message, about faith in such a message, or penitence or true desire produced by it. The only instrument is force and this, as he points out, first overawes by its destructive power, and then subdues by sheer compulsion. And this is the preparation for the gift of the Spirit by which these sinners are now transformed. (See also pages 56, 57 and passages cited.)

Not materially different in meaning is the stress that is often laid upon the effect of the visible appearance of Jesus (for example, The Coming and Kingdom of Christ, p. 76). This is appealed to in order to explain how those who have been obdurate to every plea of the gospel are to be won over to Christ. The visible splendor of Jesus, the glory and majesty of his appearance in power, are to overawe, to confound, and to convert where in times past love and truth have failed. By this means the Jews and some of the nations are to be saved. This does not, of course, fit in with the declarations that Jesus is to come not with grace but solely in judgment. But leaving this aside, the same difficulty reappears. Here,

again, is the appeal to the physical by men who have lost faith in the spiritual. The Jesus of the Gospels who saw in the lust for signs the mark of an evil and adulterous generation, who bade men be silent when he healed them, who wanted a faith that sprang from inner conviction, gives place here to one who seeks to win by dazzling the eyes and overwhelming by physical splendor. Paul's position must be reversed; the world is to be saved, not by Christ crucified, but by the signs which the Jews sought, and salvation is no longer by faith but by sight.

The Millennium—A Jewish State

The discussion of means has brought us now to the final issue, that of the end. What kind of a kingdom is this to which millennialism looks forward? The question is one upon which we rarely get definite statements. We are told in general terms that it is to be a kingdom of universal peace and righteousness, in which all the hopes of mankind are to be satisfied. A closer examination of premillennial teaching, however, reveals something quite different.

First of all, this millennial kingdom is a political institution. It is an earthly, visible, political throne which Jesus takes. Jesus is to be the world's supreme civil ruler, reigning just as Saul and David did.[23] We are to expect exactly what the Jews looked forward to, their mistake being simply a matter of date. The essence of the kingdom is not anything spiritual, not "forgiveness of sins, conversion, the gift of the Holy Spirit"; it is just that political state of which the Old

[23] Prophetic Studies, p. 143.

Testament speaks, "a literal kingdom, which has for its seat Jerusalem."[24]

The kingdom will be a Jewish state. The promises made to the Jews in the Old Testament are absolute and unconditioned, and will all be literally fulfilled. Jesus himself is to "fight for them in the day of battle and slay all their enemies."[25] The nations that are not destroyed are to be subject to the Jews. Dr. Torrey insists that all prophecy is to be "exactly and literally fulfilled," and refers specifically to passages like Isa. 49. 22, 23, and 66. 20. According to this, the Jews (good and bad, no distinction is made) are to be brought back to Jerusalem upon horses and mules and dromedaries, in litters and chariots, the nations all helping. Then the kings and the queens from all these lands (democracy apparently is but a temporary stage) will offer themselves as personal servants and nurse-maids to the returning Jews, and, indeed, will bow down and lick the dust of their feet. After this we are not surprised that in 1917 Dr. J. M. Gray, passing by Belgium and Serbia and France and all the rest, declared that "the trouble in the whole Gentile world to-day is attributable to the treatment of the Jew."

With this Jewish state goes naturally a Jewish religion, or at least a Judaized Christianity. While some earlier chiliasts were more cautious here, the leaders of the modern movement are outspoken; whether their followers realize what this position means is another matter. The distinctive elements of Christianity as we know it are dropped: the church disappears, there is no preaching of the gospel, but Judaism in all its ancient practices is

[24] Gaebelein, Harmony, p. 160.

[25] Seiss, Last Times, p. 224.

restored. The temple is to be rebuilt at Jerusalem, altars are to smoke again, and the blood of victims innumerable is to flow. "There can be no doubt about the restoration of the Sabbath (meaning the Jewish Sabbath) during the millennial age," writes Dr. C. I. Scofield with the approbation of the editors in the journal which officially represents the Moody Bible School, at the same time predicting "the restoration of all the fundamental institutions of Israel."[26] Indeed, the ceremonial and sacrifice are to exceed anything that Israel ever knew in the old days, for most of these writers hold that the elaborate provisions of Ezekiel 40 to 48 are to be literally carried out. So Dr. Scofield, W. E. B. in Jesus Is Coming, Professor Russell of the Moody School at the Prophetic Conference of 1914, A. C. Gaebelein, and others assert. Dr. Torrey holds to the same renewal of sacrifices and insists, as others do, that once a year all the people of the earth are to travel to Jerusalem and keep the feast of tabernacles.

Clearly, the revival of Judaism is not conceived as an incidental matter concerning the Jews alone. It is a divinely intended consummation, and for the whole race. Jerusalem is the world-center of religion as of politics. The supreme religious event in this millennial kingdom, the occasion which is to bring the whole world together every year for a whole week, is the feast of tabernacles, whose central feature is the daily slaughter of kids and rams, lambs and bullocks. The Christian age, the age of the gospel, becomes an "interregnum," an "incident,"[27] with scorn and contempt heaped equally

[26] Christian Workers Magazine, XVI, 471.

[27] West, The Thousand Years.

upon Christian Church and the state.[28] Christianity as we have it is not the complete fulfillment of the Old Testament,[29] The higher stage is not Christianity but this completed Judaism, in which the distinctive Jewish elements, political and religious, come to the fore. In the place of a religion that is universal and spiritual, we have the nationalism which Jesus repudiated and the ceremonialism which Paul denounced.

Finally, the kingdom of these modern millennialists represents the triumph of force and the principle of autocracy. That judgment is not changed by the fact that this is supposed to be divine force and the rule a divine autocracy. We have seen that, having discredited every ethical and spiritual agency, millennialism had recourse to external means to bring in the new age. But physical force cannot produce spiritual results; only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The kingdom which "does not come by spiritual means" cannot be spiritual. There is only one kingdom (rule) of Christ, and that is the rule of an indwelling and controlling spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And what is true in the case of one man is true in relation to government or society. It is true that millennialists speak occasionally of an effusion of the Spirit in the new age, but the one new power that comes into play, the one instrument to which appeal is constantly made, is visible manifestation and physical force.

This character of the kingdom is clearly indicated by recognized premillennial leaders. Dr. C. I. Scofield speaks of Christ as "reigning with a rod of iron." "There

[28] West, The Thousand Years, Part XI.

[29] Griffith-Thomas in Christian Workers Magazine, XVII, 13.

cannot in that age be any 'unbelievers' on earth. . . . But there will be those who, hating God, sullenly obey Christ the king."[30] "We may say we need a great democracy. . . . What we need is an emperor that will bring peace, and that is not Kaiser Wilhelm, it is Kaiser Jesus," says Dr. Torrey. Here again the issue is plain. Democracy stands for the rule of principles in the free life of the people; Dr. Torrey's only hope is in the compulsion of autocratic power. Quite consistently he suggests a return to the theocratic organization of Israel with judges as rulers.[31] With Dean Gray of the Moody School we find the same idea. "The fundamental idea of a reign, according to God, is the repression of evil. . . . While during that period Christ will be obeyed and served by the nations, yet to no small extent it will be on their part a feigned obedience and an unwilling service." Dr. Gray's reference to Zech. 14. 16–19 indicates his idea: The nations will all go to Jerusalem for the annual feasts of tabernacles, yet it will be largely religious pretense due to their fear of famine and plague.[32] There will, of course, be true saints in the earth, men born of the Spirit, but the new and distinctive element again is not a new spirit of love and righteousness overcoming evil, but, instead, mere external power repressing it.

This, then, is the kingdom to which chiliasm bids us look forward. It is not the reign of an inner spirit which has transformed the hearts of men. There is no real overthrow of sin, for that can only come by a spiritual

[30] Sunday School Times, June 17, 1916.
[31] Christian Workers Magazine, XVII, 554, 471.
[32] Mountain Peaks of Prophecy, pp. 53–55.

redemption, by the entrance of a new life into the heart. What we have is a great military revolution in which the saints under their leader are successful. Now they occupy the places of rule. Outward opposition is put down though sin still remains, with whole nations only outwardly submissive. A military victory, an autocratic reign, a Jesus content to restrain rebellious peoples by threat, where he has not already slain them by the sword, and to accept a pretended obedience; and a new and more terrible rebellion to close it all: this is the premillennial kingdom.

CHAPTER VII

PREMILLENNIALISM AND THE BIBLE

THE hold that premillennialism has upon its followers rests mainly upon two grounds. The first is its answer to the problem of evil and the longing for a new world. To men whose hearts are burdened with the evil of the world and who see no hope in the present outlook it declares that God by a deed of irresistible power shall some time destroy the evil and set up the good. The second appeal rests upon its theory and use of the Bible. For that reason this subject demands special consideration. It is here that the opponents of premillennialism have failed, including the most recent, Dr. J. H. Snowden, in his valuable book The Coming of the Lord. Dean Shailer Mathews' pamphlet must be cited as an exception, as also Frank Ballard's fine booklet Why Not Russellism? which applies at this point to all forms of Adventism. All readers of premillennialism in its various forms, including Russellism, Dowieism, Seventh-Day Adventism, as well as the modern premillennialism of the Moody and Los Angeles Institute type, which we are considering, know the insistent claim of loyalty to the Scriptures, the long and impressive lists of Scripture citation, and the vigorous denunciation of those who disagree as enemies of the Bible. Premillennialism claims to be nothing more than a transcript of what the Bible itself says. As a matter of fact its theory of the Bible is crude and false, its use of the Bible is mechanical, arbitrary, and violent, and the consequence of its theory

is the sacrifice of what is highest in Christianity to the lower levels of an earlier belief.

The Premillennial Theory of the Bible

We may call the modern conception of the Bible the vital-historical view. It is not dogmatic. It bids us understand the Bible not in the light of an imposed theory but by going to the Bible and studying it. Its conception of the Bible is historical; it sees not words dropped down from heaven but a great collection of writings from many ages coming up out of the deepest life of mankind. It is a religious conception; it magnifies rather than minimizes God's part in all this. It begins not with a set of writings but with the living God. This God is no distant being reaching down into the world once in a while to impart some message or work some deed; he is the ever-present, indwelling, redeeming God. All faith and love and righteousness are the movement of his Spirit in men's hearts. Through the long ages he has ever been seeking to reveal himself to men, to redeem them from sin, to give them his life, to establish his way of love and righteousness. Through these ages he has found men who respond in special manner to his quickening Spirit. These men knew God in their hearts, saw him in the nation's history, and interpreted him to others. From this living presence of God, through these men thus inspired, there have come the writings gathered together in our Bible.

Directly opposed to this is the theory of verbal inspiration. According to this we have not so much the inspiration of men as the communication of words. The Bible is a book communicated by God "to the smallest

word, and inflection of a word." (See the widely circulated statement of faith issued by the Niagara Conference, a group of recognized premillennial leaders.) Insistently Dr. Torrey declares that there were given to the writers of the Bible "the very words," "the precise language." To state the arguments against such a theory will seem to many a sheer waste of time; the careful study of the Bible itself is the chief reason why this conception has long since been left behind by scholars, and why it is rapidly disappearing even in popular thought. But the fact of modern premillennialism is sufficient reason for our consideration. The foundation of this whole doctrine is involved in literal infallibility, as is that of Russellism, Dowieism, and similar aberrations. All of them work on the same theory, quoting proof-texts, building on words and phrases. Remove this theory, and "the complicated structure of theological details built upon it comes clattering down to a mere heap of religious verbiage." Further this verbal-inspiration theory reveals the character of the premillennial theology—dualistic, mechanical, unethical.

The first criticism to be made is that this theory is mechanical. There are just two ways of conceiving the work of God's Spirit in man. The one is mechanical: the Spirit is an external force that overrides and compels the human spirit. This is the primitive idea. The other conception is vital and ethical: the divine Spirit is an indwelling Presence working through man's thought and feeling and will, not dispossessing or overwhelming, but elevating and transforming. Premillennialism stands for the mechanical idea in its thought of inspiration as in that of the world's final salvation. Verbal

inspiration is of necessity mechanical. Where the very word is given the writer becomes, to use the old figure of its advocates, simply the pen that is driven by another power, *calamus Spiritus sancti.* In modern picture, he is no more than the lifeless machine upon which these words are being written. Consistently then when Dr. R. A. Torrey insists upon the very words being given he goes on to minimize the human and reduce the writer to this passive machine. The prophet, we are told, was "carried along in his utterance, regardless of his own will and thought," never speaking "from his own consciousness," ofttimes not understanding what he wrote and being compelled to study his own words.[1] The same position essentially is expressed, through more baldly, by J. H. Brookes, a noted premillennialist writer of the last generation: "The apostles had nothing more to do in preparing the New Testament than the pen of the writer has to do in giving us the production of the author's brain" (The Lord Cometh, p. 316). In similar vein writes A. C. Gaebelein: "The prophets were visited by the Spirit of Christ, and he prophesied through them. After they had written down their prophecies they began to read them, and were not able to understand them fully" (Harmony of the Prophetic Word, p. 14).

The dualism of this theory is apparent, and like its mechanical character it underlies the whole premillennial theology. God and man stand sharply opposed to each other. If the Spirit of God be present, then, in so far forth, the spirit of man is excluded, and human thought and consciousness must be minimized or shut

[1] Fundamental Doctrines, Chapter I.

out altogether. The doctrine of the incarnation ought to exclude that heresy once for all, for there the church declared that where human life was at the highest God was most fully present. And that is our message to men to-day: Let God in, we say, and you will have human life not repressed or mutilated but at its fullest and richest.

Fundamental too is the error of intellectualism in this theory. It assumes that religion is primarily a matter of correct ideas, that Christianity is a sum of truths to be accepted, that revelation is a set of ideas and the Bible a textbook of theology. But revelation is not a doctrine of God handed down; it is God showing himself to men. It comes to men in the experience of life, now in a home-tragedy like that which came to Hosea, now in a nation's agony like that which showed to Jeremiah the religion of the spirit which was to replace the religion of national institutions, now in some great soul-experience like that which came upon Isaiah in the temple. Religion is the life of fellowship that comes when man answers in love and obedience this God who thus makes himself known. It is not accepting ideas but living a life in a new spirit. The Bible is a book filled with this self-revealing God and the life that has come from him.

With the idea of verbal inspiration goes necessarily that of absolute infallibility. For a spiritual and ethical conception of inspiration such infallibility is not involved. It does not detract from Paul's spirit of love or his great message of a God who in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, that the apostle supposed that Jesus would return to earth in visible form within a few years. But

if inspiration means not a life from God but so many words from God, then we have a wholly different situation. Then every word in the Bible, as coming from God, must be infallibly and eternally true and binding. We must look at some of the fatal consequences of this theory as it works out in modern premillennialism.

Some Consequences of the Theory

Let us begin with the ethical. The Old Testament shows certain moral ideas which are far below the level of the New Testament. Here is the principle of retaliation: "Thine eye shall not pity; life *shall go* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deut. 19. 21; compare Exod. 21. 24; Lev. 24. 19, 20). Here is the story of the conquest of Canaan as given in Joshua, chapters 6–11. The invading armies of the Hebrews enter the land. Certain cities are "devoted" to Jehovah. Jericho is one, and of it we read that "they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, both young and old, and ox and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword" (Josh. 6. 21). This same tale is told of one city after the other, the killing, not only of men in battle, but of helpless women, of children and babies, and of the very beasts. And not only are we told that this was done at the command of Jehovah, but that Jehovah himself hardened the hearts of these people so that they might fight Israel and be destroyed (Josh. 10. 40; 11. 20). Such a tale of slaughter could be consistently defended only from two standpoints. One would be that of a religion of selfishness and force, brutal beyond the worst that the world-war has seen. The other position would be that

of the theory of verbal inspiration, compelling a man to accept all this as the very words of God. In either case the conclusion condemns the doctrine.

The so-called "imprecatory psalms" form a problem by themselves. There could be no sharper contrast than that between their implacable bitterness and the spirit of Jesus. Not even in this last terrible war did any nation dare to set forth principles like this, and where such deeds were wrought they called forth universal horror and execration. Let us look at some of them.

"God will let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.
Consume them in wrath, consume them, so that they shall be no more:

. . . . . .

At evening let them return, let them howl like a dog, and go round about the city.
They shall wander up and down for food,
And tarry all night if they be not satisfied (Psa. 59. 10, 13–15).
O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us.
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones
Against the rock" (Psa. 137. 8, 9).[2]

There is not merely the desire for vengeance here but a gloating over it.

"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance:

[2] See also Psa. 69. 22–28; 139. 21, 22; 140. 9, 10; 143. 12.

He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked" (Psa. 58. 10).

The spirit of vengeance is not satisfied with punishment of the guilty but goes back to the parents and on to the children. It does not want to see repentance and forgiveness, but asks that even the prayer of its foe may be turned into sin! So in Psa. 109:

"Let his prayer be turned into sin,

. . . . . .

Let his children be fatherless
And his wife a widow.

. . . . . .

Let there be none to extend kindness unto him;
Neither let there be any to have pity upon his fatherless children.

. . . . . .

Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with Jehovah;
And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out."

With the theory of the Bible that has been commended above we can understand the presence of such passages. Not all at once could God lift men to the heights; not all at once were they able to receive his truth. The presence of such defects does not shut our eyes to the truth that is present, and the correction of such views is found in the Old Testament itself in messages like that of Amos' opening chapters, or Isaiah, chapter 19, or the Book of Jonah. But if we really believe in Jesus as the supreme revelation of God, there is only one thing to do: we must judge such passages in the light of his teaching. So the Anglican Church but a little while ago voted to exclude

these psalms from use in the church service as being "most unchristlike in character and an insult to the Divine Majesty." And a full century and a third ago John Wesley eliminated them from the book of worship which he prepared for the Methodist Church in America, declaring them "highly improper for the mouths of a Christian congregation."

The theory of verbal inspiration, however, must hold all these passages as the very words of God and as strictly and permanently true. We need not be surprised then to have the Christian Workers Magazine oppose the action of the Anglican Church referred to above, nor to have Dean Gray write in defense: "The imprecation psalms were written for Israel's comfort. . . . The imprecations are to fall upon the Gentile nations in that day when they shall be gathered against Israel once more returned to her own land."[3] Similar is the position taken by A. C. Gaebelein in a volume for which Dr. C. I. Scofield writes a commendatory preface. He holds these terrible imprecations as inspired and sure to be fulfilled. With that strange Judaism that colors this modern adventism he declares that "the pious Jews living in that time of trouble will utter these words," and they "will be answered by the majestic appearing of the heavenly King."[4] The paganism of this position is more fully seen when one notes this author's constant insistence upon literalness of fulfillment. The premillennial kingdom is to be brought in with breathings of vengeance by the Jews not only against opposing warriors but against parents and wives and children; and God

[3] Harmony of the Prophetic Word, p. 46.

[4] Christian Workers Magazine, XVIII, pp. 283, 284.

is to fulfill these imprecations even to the dashing of babes against the rocks. Quite as frank is the editor of the Sunday School Times, C. G. Trumbull: "The imprecations upon enemies spoken by the prophet-psalmist were inspired by God. . . . The imprecations do not belong to us; they do belong . . . to the dispensation of law and judgment. . . . In that day the imprecatory psalms again shall have a literal meaning, their true fulfillment. . . . These imprecatory psalms are great prophecies. But, like all of the prophecies, they will be literally fulfilled."[5] Similar is the position taken by Brookes.[6]

There is, of course, no need of arguing against the contention of these writers. The common Christian mind not deluded by a theory revolts in horror against such teaching. What is important for us to see is that such conclusions stamp as false the theory of verbal inspiration which makes them necessary and on which premillennialism rests. Nothing could more surely undermine the position of Christianity than such teaching as this. Our greatest need to-day is to lift the world above militarism, with its spirit of bitterness and vengeance, with its doctrine of force and national selfishness; and at such a time as this these teachers are exalting that doctrine as Christian, are declaring that that spirit and method shall usher in the new age. For the faith of honest and earnest young men and women no current infidelity is more dangerous. And this, indeed, is infidelity in the truest sense. These men in clinging to their theory of the Bible with all its consequences are denying the authority of the spirit of Jesus. The theory of verbal inspira-

[5] Editorial, February 3, 1917.

[6] The Lord Cometh, pp. 401, 402.

tion and the defense of these passages in particular must fall before the teachings of Jesus. Clearly and definitely he set his higher ideal of grace and good will. Specifically he mentioned the principle of retaliation as given in these passages and repudiated it. In similar manner he opposed his own teaching to other Old Testament passages (see Matt. 5. 21–48; compare 5. 38–48 with Exod. 21. 24; Lev. 24. 20; Deut. 19. 21. Note Mark 10. 2–12 as against Deut. 24. 1; Mark 7. 14–23 as against Lev., chaps. 11–15). The theory of verbal inspiration, so far from being the mark of high orthodoxy, is the refusal of the authority of Jesus and the denial of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is true in the field of ethics is true also in point of religious ideas. The theory of verbal inspiration makes all parts of the Old Testament equally true and valid. The result is that Judaistic character which so strongly marks premillennialism. Christian thought sees in the Old Testament a noble preparation for the New, but it knows that there is lower as well as higher, husk as well as kernel. So it is selective; it drops the former and keeps the latter; it tests the old by the new, that is, by the spirit of Christ. Premillennialism, with its verbal inspiration, must keep both, and as a result the lower once more dominates the higher. Only a few illustrations can here be given of this Judaism which is so fatal to the claim of premillennialism as an interpretation of Christianity.

Take first the Jewish nationalism and its hope. We know that there are two distinct tendencies in the Old Testament. One is nobly universal. It sees a God whose judgments fall on all nations (Amos, Chaps. 1 and

2), and whose purpose of mercy extends likewise to all (Jonah). He led Israel out of Egypt, but so also the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir (Amos 9. 7). And in the coming day of his rule Israel and her foes shall be joined in common blessing and in mutual service (Isa. 19. 19–25). The other tendency is nationalistic and selfish, and this lower tendency survives and is dominant in premillennialism. All its details may be found in the Adventist millennium. The coming rule of God becomes simply the rule of Israel. Her enemies are to be slain, her territories enlarged. In keeping with the old imperialism she compels conquered kings to bow in the dust and subject peoples to bring annual tribute. Political subjection is not enough; once a year, under threat of divine punishment by famine and pestilence, these people must come to Jerusalem to worship. They will not, however, be allowed to enter the house of worship itself. In numerous passages that might be cited modern premillennialists affirm all these features as belonging to the coming millennium. As one of them remarks, the Jews of Jesus' day (his foes) had the right idea of the kingdom, their only error being one of date; they made the mistake of looking for this kingdom at the first instead of at the second advent.

A second place where this Judaism appears is in the religious picture of the future. The central feature in the Adventist millennium is a restoration of the old Jewish religion; with the old Jewish state there return the old Jewish ritual and sacrifice. To many premillennialists this idea is clearly unwelcome; it follows, however, necessarily from their ideas of verbal inspiration and

infallibility. Many Old Testament passages beyond question picture the restored temple and its sacrifices as the central glory of the coming age, the elaborate plan of Ezekiel, chapters 40–48, being the notable example. The premillennial principle of absolute and literal fulfillment leaves them no option. For these men know that if they stop here they have repudiated the literalism with which their system stands or falls. So one after another such leaders as R. A. Torrey, C. I. Scofield, Professor Russell of Moody, A. C. Gaebelein, and W. E. Blackstone declare that the provisions of Ezekiel, chapters 40–48, are to be carried out in the millennium. Dr. Scofield, writing in the official journal of the Moody Bible Institute and upon special invitation, predicts "the restoration of all the fundamental institutions of Israel," including the Jewish Sabbath.

The average premillennial disciple has certainly not faced the meaning of this. The whole ancient system of Sabbaths and new moons and feast-days and sacrifices is to come back, and on a scale more elaborate than in any previous day (see Ezekiel). Again the blood is to flow in the continual slaughter of bullocks and rams and lambs. In sin offerings and trespass offerings atonement is to be made for the people by the priests, and these are to be the condition upon which Jehovah will accept the people (Ezek. 43. 27; 45. 17, 20). None but Jews will be allowed to enter the temple, except by becoming Jewish proselytes and being circumcised (Ezek. 44. 9; compare Joel 3. 17 and Zech. 14. 21); but once a year every inhabitant of the non-Jewish nations, under threat of severe penalty, is to go to Jerusalem for a week and keep the feast of the tabernacles. The fulfillment of

this prophecy (Zech. 14. 16–19) is particularly insisted upon by premillennialists. Temple, priest, ritual, and sacrifice, this in the premillennial scheme is to be the center of the world's religious life, and the one religious event for which the whole world is to be summoned together each year is to be an ancient Jewish feast whose outstanding feature is the daily slaying of innumerable beasts.

The Premillennial Use of the Bible

We turn now to consider the way in which premillennialists use the Bible in support of their theories. We begin with the central idea, that of the millennium itself, the theory of a reign of Christ here on earth to last a thousand years and to precede the eternal and heavenly kingdom.

The historical origin of this theory is known to us. The common Old Testament hope was simply that of such an earthly kingdom; of a future life and a heavenly kingdom the earlier writers knew nothing. Such a hope could not permanently satisfy, and the centuries just before Christ saw the rise of new ideas. Men wanted individual immortality and saw the need of individual judgment and reward. But while the thought of the heavenly kingdom thus arose, that of the earthly kingdom remained, and in the Jewish apocalyptic writings of this time these ideas were often strangely and confusingly mingled. Then came at length some writers who united them as follows: first there was to come an earthly kingdom for a limited period, then the eternal heavenly kingdom. Though various periods were first put forth, the idea prevailed that this kingdom was to last a thou-

sand years. From these Jewish writings this theory passed over into certain Christian circles, appearing in one passage in the New Testament.

The premillennial effort to read this doctrine into the Old Testament will serve as a first illustration of their handling of the Bible. Dean J. M. Gray, of the Moody Bible Institute, for example, writes that the period of a thousand years "is identified in many ways throughout the Bible." While the exact term is but once specifically named, he says again, "yet the period . . . is named again and again. We quoted Moses, David, Isaiah, Amos, Peter, Paul, John, and Jesus Christ."[7] The passages referred to by Dr. Gray as cited in a previous chapter are as follows: Gen. 3. 15; 12. 3; Psa. 2. 7–9; Isa. 11. 3–6; 9: 11–15; Matt. 16. 27, 28; Acts 3. 19–21; Rom. 8. 19. To study these citations seriously would be a waste of time. Take the first two. Gen. 3. 15 is the word to the serpent: "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. 12. 3 is the promise to Abraham: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And these are Dr. Gray's best references to support the central doctrine of his system, the intermediate kingdom of a thousand years. It is enough to say that not one of these passages speaks of an intermediate kingdom, nor would they suggest it even except to a mind already possessed with the idea and seeking for some support.

More ambitious is the effort made a generation ago by Nathanael West, to whom Dr. Gray refers as authority on this point. Dr. West wrote five hundred pages on The Thousand Years in Both Testaments, but one looks in vain in all this argument for a single Old Testament

[7] Text Book on Prophecy, p. 131.

statement about a thousand-year kingdom, or even for a clear reference to an intermediate kingdom. All Dr. West can do is to pick out arbitrarily such phrases as "the third day," "many days," and "his days," and declare that they refer to the millennium. In the end he really confesses his failure, at the same time indicating how premillennialists must proceed in order to get their results. Having asserted that Zechariah "in the clearest manner distinguishes two advents, two ends, and the millennial age follows the second," he adds in frank self-contradiction that these are "involute in one another in the earlier Old Testament revelation; The Ends and Ages there confounded" (p. 257). It is therefore necessary, he declares, to "combine" the expressions of the different prophets, to "arrange them in their temporal order and succession, supplementing by one prophet the partial picture of the end drawn by another" (pp. 77, 78). Reduced to plain English, this is the admission that it is the premillennialist writer himself who supplies the Adventist program of events (the "temporal order and succession"), into which he then fits at pleasure the biblical phrases and passages.

Not only does the Old Testament make no reference to two kingdoms, but it definitely excludes the idea of an earthly kingdom of limited duration. Psalmist and prophet alike have no thought but that of a permanent earthly kingdom. It is to be "forever and ever," "a kingdom which shall never be destroyed," "an everlasting kingdom, which shall not pass away, . . . which shall not be destroyed." Such words are fatal to premillennialism, which must hold at the same time the idea of an infallible Scripture and of a kingdom that

lasts but a thousand years. For the most part millennialists simply disregard these passages. Dr. West is an exception. He seeks to prove that eternal means temporal. Forever, he says, does not mean forever, but "simply unbroken continuance up to a special epoch."[8] In all this, of course, the school of literalism says good-bye to the principle upon which it stakes its existence.

In modern Adventism the theory of the "two returns" is another prominent feature. Jesus' first return is to be silent, invisible, unnoticed. At this time the saints are taken up into the air ("the rapture"), there to remain with Jesus and to escape the "tribulation" which follows. After seven years follows the second return, this time visible, militant, for judgment and destruction. Remembering now that this school takes the Bible, and the Bible only, we note with interest the fact that not a passage in the Bible makes this distinction between the two returns. A prominent speaker at the recent Philadelphia "Prophetic Conference," in answer to a direct question, gave the following passages as "the strongest proof from the Scripture regarding the two stages of the coming of Christ": Dan. 12. 1; Isa. 26. 20, 21; 1 Cor. 15. 51–53; 1 Thess. 4. 17; Luke 17. 31–37; Rev. 12. 6; 3. 10. So far from distinguishing two returns, most of these passages make no reference to any return at all, the speaker having simply picked out certain passages which refer to a deliverance from future trouble. On the other hand, the passages taken from Paul which do refer to the second coming flatly contradict the theory of a silent, unnoticed return; for Paul declares that when the saints are raised

[8] The Thousand Years, pp. 349ff.

"the trumpet shall sound"; and when Christ comes for his saints it will be "with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God." In this case the apostles of honest literalism begin at once to spiritualize[9], or arbitrarily to divide what belongs together.[10]

John 5. 28, 29 and Dan. 12. 2 give further illustration of the arbitrary and violent treatment of passages which interfere with premillennial teaching. In this case it is the Adventist theory of two resurrections and two judgments, for the saints at the beginning of the millennium, for others at the close. There is no difference outside premillennial circles as to the meaning of John 5. 28, 29. It clearly speaks of a common resurrection and judgment for good and evil. To escape this meaning the premillennialists change John's "hour" into a thousand years[11] and make the passage read thus: "The period (of a thousand years) cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; (at the beginning) they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and (a thousand years later) they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." Dan. 12. 2, one of the very few Old Testament passages with a clear reference to a resurrection, reads: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" The accepted versions of the Bible all agree in this translation. Premillennialists, by liberal interpolation, have arrived at the following version: "And many *from among* the sleepers

[9] Brookes, The Lord Cometh, p. 527.

[10] Haldeman, Coming of Christ, pp. 307ff., 310ff.

[11] For example, Gordon, Ecce Venit, p. 49.

of the dust of the earth shall awake; *these* shall be unto everlasting life; but *those* (the rest of the sleepers who do not awake at this time) shall be unto shame."[12] After this we are not surprised to read of "prophetic foreshortenings" and commas that are 1,800 years long,[13] and of the frank claim of the right of "supplementing Scripture with Scripture" in order to "supply whatever knowledge our text fails to give."[14]

Readers of Adventist writings will recall the frequent statements which declare that the Bible from beginning to end is full of this doctrine, and which number the hundreds of passages in the Old Testament and the New that refer to the second advent. We have seen with what easy disregard of historical setting or real meaning the premillennialist gathers his proof-texts, but further illustration will not be amiss taken in connection with the doctrine of the second advent itself.

Jesus is Coming, by W. E. Blackstone, is probably the most widely circulated modern premillennial writing. Of the devout spirit and earnest purpose of its author there is no question. All the more glaringly does it exhibit the deficiencies of the premillennial use of the Bible. On page 196 the author lists "some of the *principal* passages which refer to our Lord's return." Eleven Old Testament passages head the list. Not one of these in any way suggests a second coming of the Messiah as distinguished from a first, and most of them do not refer to any advent, first or second.

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[12] Taken with italics and parenthesis from W. E. Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, p. 57.

[13] Jesus is Coming, p. 56; Ecce Venit, pp. 227, 228.

[14] Premillennial Essays, p. 85.

The first of these is Deut. 33. 2, a distinct reference to a past event—the manifestation of Jehovah at Sinai and the giving of the law:

"Jehovah came from Sinai,
And rose from Seir unto them;
He shined forth from Mount Paran,
And he came from the ten thousand of holy ones:
At his right hand was a fiery law for them."

Only that combination of free imagination with indifference to historical facts which marks premillennial exegesis could be equal to the feat of finding here a reference to the second advent. The next passage is Psa. 2, a Messianic psalm. The four that follow do not allude to the Messiah at all. Psa. 67. 4 summons the nations to rejoice because God will govern them with equity. The next two passages (Psa. 96. 10–13; 98. 9) simply declare that Jehovah will judge (that is, rule) the world with righteousness, while Psa. 102. 16 again refers to the past and simply states that—

"Jehovah hath built up Zion;
He hath appeared in his glory."

These are the first six of the "principal" passages cited by the author to support the doctrine of the second coming.

Long ago Protestant scholars saw that there was only one safe and right way for biblical study, and that was to seek, first of all, the historical meaning. The citations from Mr. Blackstone are typical of the constant disregard of this obligation by premillennialists. The theory of prediction and the emphasis on verbal inspiration set

these interpreters free from historical limitations. The fulfillment of prediction is sought in the external rather than the spiritual, and the emphasis upon the verbal opens a wide door to the arbitrary and fanciful, as any study of these writings will abundantly show. A recent illustration of this verbal fulfillment is found with a writer during the war who saw in General Allenby's capture of Jerusalem a "striking fulfillment of Isa. 31. 5: 'As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over it he will preserve it.'" The fulfillment here is found in the part taken by aviators. Such writers, of course, are quite undisturbed by the fact that the passage in question specifies the Assyrian foe (cited by Sheppard, The Lord's Coming, pp. 67, 68). Of a piece with this are the numerous declarations that were heard during the war that all these events were the fulfillment of exact predictions. A typical advertisement found by the writer announced as a subject, "The League of Nations and Shantung according to Bible predictions," and added, "The prophecy is so definite that it even mentions Japan by name as the Germany of the Orient."

The writings of modern Adventism are full of the assertions of devotion to the Bible and attacks upon its "enemies." And, indeed, no greater difference could be imagined than that between the premillennial use of the Bible and that of the modern historical student. The latter is moved by the earnest desire to find the actual meaning of these writings in the minds of those who wrote them and for the men of their day. Premillennialism, on the contrary, combines most of the faults

that have appeared in the history of biblical study: a literalism which cannot understand picture or poetry, "spiritualizing" when this is needed, a fancy that runs riot with typology and allegory, a violence that overrides plain meanings, and an arbitrariness that finds its "proofs" with no concern for historical setting. We should do wrong if we followed the example of these premillennialists and attributed to moral obliquity the errors of those with whom we differ. These are simply the straits to which good men are driven who have staked their faith upon an untenable theory of the Bible and an impossible conception of religion. In the light of these facts, however, it is clear that we have here loyalty to preconceived theory rather than loyalty to the Bible.

CHAPTER VIII

WHERE PREMILLENNIALISM LEADS

Premillennialism Tested Practically

It is an appropriate test for any religious system to ask where it would lead if it were consistently and thoroughly carried out. Premillennialism, as has been pointed out, is not an unrelated theory at one point in theology, but a complete doctrinal system. And while doctrinal differences are not always very significant for practice, here is one that cuts deeper than the differences which separate the great Protestant bodies to-day. More and more Christian forces, irrespective of denominational lines, are committed to certain great movements. Some of these are broadly social, like those of democracy, social justice, international peace through a league of nations, and reforms like the prohibition of liquor. Others are more specifically church movements, like religious education, the modern missionary movement, Christian unity and federation, and the great religious forward movements of recent years. A consistent application of Adventist principles would make a sweeping change in this whole program. It is in these practical consequences that there lies the necessity of a discussion like this. That many Adventist adherents do not see the logic of their position and are better than their principles makes it only the more necessary that the logic of that position should be pointed out.

Premillennialism and Democracy

Democracy may have meant at one time simply a form of political organization, or even the repudiation

of restraint and assertion of individual liberty. That would not explain the passionate and self-sacrificing devotion with which multitudes hold to this ideal to-day. To-day it is less a political form and more a great ideal resting upon moral principles. It declares that human personality is sacred, that the way of life is freedom, that freedom can only be in a common submission to a higher order of the right and good, and that the obligation to serve goes with every possession of privilege and power. Whatever it meant to certain statesmen, these were the ideals that stirred the masses during the Great War; they were fighting militarism and autocracy because these meant the oppression of men, just as to-day they want social justice and peace through a league of nations because this will mean a fairer chance for men. These are not mere political principles; they are fundamental to religion and their source is in Christianity. To embody them in human society is to bring by so much the rule of God upon earth. What has premillennialism to say with reference to the aims and hopes of this new democracy?

1. Modern Adventism declares that the hope of democracy is vain. If we fought the Great War to make the world safe for democracy and to further it in the earth, then our treasures of life and goods were spent in vain. "It is one of the ruling ideas of the century that man is fully capable of self-government, and that he is sure to work out—at least with the beneficent aid of Christianity—the great problem of government by the people for the people's good. To this confident anticipation of our democratic age premillennialism everywhere opposes the distasteful declaration that, according

to the Scripture, all these hopes are doomed to disappointment, and that already, in the counsels of God, 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin' is written concerning modern democracies no less than concerning Babylon of old."[1] Premillennialism is committed to a fatalistic scheme which it finds marked out in the Bible, and in that scheme democracy has no place. This has all been settled, as Professor Kellogg says, "in the counsels of God." Dr. Gray finds indications in the Bible that democracy is to fail in Russia and monarchy to be the future lot of that people.[2] If this be true, of course it is foolish for the men of Russia to hunger and toil and fight for freedom.

2. But democracy is not only vain as a hope; it is false as an ideal. A few years ago the Christian Workers Magazine, published by the Moody Bible School, printed a communication containing the following:

"The American system of government is based on the principle, 'Governments receive their just powers from the consent of the governed'—which principle is false. Governments derive their just powers from God. Democracy (self-government) is the antithesis of autocracy—God's ideal of government. When He comes whose right it is to be the absolute monarch of men, and not till then, God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Self-government whether in an individual or in a nation is abhorrent to God's order for the creature."[3]

Upon this the editor commented as follows:

"We publish the whole of the above because we like

[1] S. H. Kellogg, Bibliotheca Sacra, XLV, pp. 273, 274.
[2] A Text Book on Prophecy, p. 192.
[3] Christian Workers Magazine, XVI, 97, 98.

its spirit and because it contains much truth, well expressed, which we are pleased to place before our readers. . . . We agree that, scripturally viewed, the basis on which our government rests is false, that the ideal government is an absolute monarchy where Christ is the monarch, and that it is inconsistent for a Christian 'to make himself part of a system whose principle is the apotheosis of man.'" The Christian is to be subject to the powers that be, it is added, voting and bearing arms, "and yet in spirit not be a part of that system to which they belong."

Such expressions do not stand alone. Thus a speaker at the "prophetic conference" of 1886 refers to "the modern blasphemous doctrine of popular sovereignty."[4] A leading speaker at the Philadelphia "prophetic conference" in 1918 opposed Christianity to democracy and declared: "The old gospel is a gospel of divine redemption versus human democracy."[5] In similar vein J. H. Brookes refers to "idle talk affirming the inalienable rights of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, to trial by jury, to vote, and to other fancied privileges. . . . Man has no inalienable right except the right to be damned."[6]

3. The premillennial ideal for the future of humanity is not democracy but autocracy. The rule of Christ in the coming kingdom is conceived in terms of an Oriental autocracy, the dominance of sheer power. "He comes back, no longer inviting voluntary allegiance, but to compel obedience."[7] "We may say we need a great democ-

[4] Prophetic Studies, p. 53.
[5] Light on Prophecy, p. 335.
[6] The Lord Cometh, p. 388.
[7] Pink, The Redeemer's Return, p. 346.

racy," says Dr. R. A. Torrey. "They had a great democracy in France at the time of the great revolution, and the streets ran with blood. What we need is an emperor, but there is only one emperor that will bring peace and that is not Kaiser Wilhelm, it is Kaiser Jesus." This was published in the Christian Workers Magazine just before our entrance into the war for democracy.[8] It is suggestive of Dr. Torrey's conception alike of democracy and of Christianity that the French Revolution represents to him a "great democracy" and that he can refer to our Lord as "Kaiser Jesus."

This attitude toward democracy is not surprising because it is quite in keeping with the premillennial conception of the nature of religion and of authority. The great advance that Christianity made upon the legalism of the Jews was when Jesus "substituted the idea of an inward, self-determined obedience for that of statutory law." Paul saw that faith was a principle of freedom, and that the rule of God was not outer compulsion but the control through an indwelling spirit that was at once the power of God and the true life of man. Failing to grasp this idea in religion, it is no wonder that Adventism rejects democracy, whose ideal is the self-government of peoples in similar manner by a free subjection to the right and the common good. No one desires to impugn the loyalty of premillennialists—they may be far better than their creed, though that is no commendation of the doctrine. But it is fair to ask what the consequences would be if men adopted generally this system, which says to all democratic hopes of this longing age, "There is no chance;" which says to democratic faith, "Your

[8] Christian Workers Magazine, XVII, 554.

principles are false;" which says to its followers that they should yield outward obedience, but not belong in spirit to the state of which they are a part.

Premillennialism and Social Reforms

In speaking of social reforms we are simply specifying in detail what we mean by the new democracy. It is important to do so, however, because under this head we bring together a great many movements expressive of the highest aims and noblest devotion of increasing multitudes. There are movements of moral reform, like the fight against liquor and vice. There are those aimed at special industrial evils, like child labor, seven-day work, excessive hours of toil, and inadequate wages. There are broader programs, like that of the British Labor party, which aim to bring in democracy in industrial organization. And there is the movement which seeks by an international fellowship not merely to banish war, but to establish justice and secure a fair chance, economically and politically, for all peoples, small and great. These are great dreams, and not merely dreams, for at every point in the foregoing program there has been definite advance. Most important, however, is the fact that these ideals of humanity and justice have been uttered in the ears of all men and their authority recognized. And all the selfish strife of individual and class and nation must not blind us to the fact that there were never so many men joined together to work for these ideals, and never so many who have risen above the thought of mere individual interest to that of a better order for all men. No one can read such declarations as that of the British Labor party in 1918 and that of the

Quaker Employers in England of the same year without realizing the fine idealism contained in both.

And to this movement the churches stand committed to-day. A generation ago one heard only the voices of individuals here and there; to-day we hear the utterances of great Christian communions. In the last year or two they have come from all sides: the Federal Council of Churches in America, the Northern Baptist Convention, the Committee of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in this country, the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Archbishops' Committee of the Anglican Church, the Young Women's Christian Association, the International Sunday-School Association—these are some that have spoken of late. Back of these utterances lie certain fundamental convictions. God's purpose is to redeem man's whole life in all its relations and institutions. Religion is always a gift of God, but it is always man's task at the same time, and a chief part of that task is to inquire how men are to live together in industry, in the state, and as nations. The will of God must be wrought out in social institutions and relations, and there is no kingdom of God except as God rules in the individual heart *and* in the social life. And such a new order is God's will for men, not for some other world or some distant time, but for here and now, a world of truth and justice and peace.

Anyone familiar with the principles of Adventism in any measure need not be told what its attitude is here. To the eager hosts giving themselves increasingly to such hopes and such service it can only say, "Your goal is a mistake, your hope a delusion; no matter what you do nothing will come of it, since God has not planned any

such thing for our age." At a time when Great Britain was summoning her sons, not simply to repel a great danger, but to fight for a new world order, the English premillennialists issued their manifesto declaring that "all human schemes of reconstruction must be subsidiary to the second coming of our Lord." Social theories promise much, says Dr. Torrey, "but they all end in failure, and they all will end in failure until our Lord comes."[9] Religion to-day is an individual affair. "To capture politics for God" the Christian Workers Magazine declares to be an impossible hope. "The uplift of society as a whole," it asserts, "is a perversion of gospel salvation, which is purely individualistic." There is such a thing as morale in the armies of reform and social service. What would there be left of it if the men in the ranks held these Adventist ideas? Take the prohibition movement for illustration. The march of events has discredited premillennial pessimism here (as, for example, in Munhall, The Lord's Return, pp. 59, 60), but what would the effect have been upon leaders and followers if they had held the doctrine that the world to-day belonged to Satan and the only progress possible was a progress in evil?[10]

The same situation appears when we turn to the present movement for world-peace through a league of nations. What is the use of our efforts if God has decided against this and if the Bible predicts not peace, but only greater wars? By their very position premillennialists are driven to belittle, if not oppose, all efforts looking to world-peace, for the success of such movements

[9] The Return of the Lord Jesus, p. 91.

[10] See Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, p. 148.

would be fatal to that position. With the success of peace plans "the Word of God would be proved untrue."[11] So a generation ago, when an arbitration treaty between Great Britain and America was being discussed, Dr. N. West disparaged the idea and wrote that "only after the last great anti-Christian conflict is such a thing possible, and that the First High Court of Arbitration for National Differences will be set up in Jerusalem, bringing universal peace . . . a consummation to be realized only at the 'End of the Days.' "[12] Similarly Dr. Torrey declares to-day that our peace conferences "will prove utterly futile to accomplish all that is in the mind and heart of our greatest statesmen. . . . We talk of disarmament, but we all know that it is not coming. All our present peace plans will end in the most awful wars and conflicts this old world ever saw."[13]

Premillennialism and the State

The attitude of premillennialism toward the state deserves special attention. We know that the Christian state is as yet in the making, but that God's purpose includes the Christian state is clear, for the state is simply the life which men live together in certain special relations. We recognize, too, the growing importance of the state, how it expresses and molds human life on every side; that life must be so shaped that it will secure for men freedom and justice and peace. The state aims at the union of all for the welfare of each. It is thus in God's intent as truly sacred, as truly a part of his rule on earth, as is home or church.

[11] Christian Workers Magazine, XVII, 372.
[12] The Thousand Years, p. 446.
[13] The Return of the Lord Jesus, p. 89.

Premillennialism is committed to a very different position. For it only an individual salvation is possible. The state in this age lies outside God's plan of redemption. It is a pagan institution, evil to-day and with no possibility except that of growing worse. This characterization of Adventism is easily substantiated. The dualism which underlies premillennialism is especially clear here. All governments naturally belong to "this wicked world, which is so radically opposed to God, and under the present control of his arch enemy," that is, Satan.[14] "There is not, and never has been, such a company of people as a Christian nation, and never will be until the Lord comes. The nations in God's sight are regarded as great antagonistic world powers, who act at the instigation of Satan, and whose authority will be terminated by the sure and certain coming of his Christ."[15] The fullest discussion of this point is given in the standard work of Nathanael West. He points out that the state is under the "law of deterioration"—an important Adventist conception—and can only grow worse. That is the significance of Daniel's image, which sets forth "the beastly and metallic character of Gentile government," that is, of the modern state. The idea of a Christian state, he declares, was gotten neither from the prophets nor from Christ nor from the apostles, but is one of the false lures of the age. Christian men who teach the idea of progress (the redemption of the state) are doing the devil's work. The state of to-day is worse than the pagan state of antiquity. Its Bible name is "great Babylon," and "great Babylon, bearing the

[14] Blackstone, Jesus Is Coming, p. 148.
[15] Christian Workers Magazine, XVII, 277.

Christian name, a church at every corner, a preacher on every street, is worse than the Chaldean city." The modern state is "the Beast," the "Mother-Harlot." We are to pray for the state, but that involves no hope for the state, but simply that we may be left alone "to lead a godly life . . . and wait for his Son from heaven." A Christian state is impossible because God has not included this in his plans. "What we are pleased to call the Christian state is simply the Christian Beast."[16] Christian patriotism is not blind to national sins and failures; above the nation it sees the righteousness which is of God. But it believes that this nation was in God's plan, and that it is God's purpose to establish this land in liberty and righteousness and to make her a servant of the world. It sings,

> "Our fathers' God to thee,
> Author of liberty,"

and thinks not of a hopelessly pagan state, but of "freedom's holy light." That is very different from resigning the state to the devil and simply seeking to save "the number of God's elect."

It may, of course, be said in reply to this whole discussion that premillennialism does not rule out the hope of a new state and a new social order, but that it merely assigns this to the next age and expects this from the hand of God. Quite true, but that involves two points: First, it excludes all those appeals to men to invest their lives, that God may through them bring in his rule upon earth. In its place we have Dean Gray's scornful phrase about men "bringing in a kingdom by their puny efforts," and that hopeless dualism which assumes that where

[16] West, The Thousand Years, pp. 439–47.

God works, man is ruled out. Second, nineteen centuries have passed by during which, according to Adventism, this new age has been imminent. There is nothing in premillennial teaching to compel us to believe that the world may not need to wait nineteen or twice nineteen centuries more, since, according to men like Dr. Scofield and Dr. Pierson, "imminent" with premillennialists means simply "next on the docket," whether near or remote. For an indefinite period, then, Adventism has nothing to suggest to us but a passive pessimism over against a pagan state and a hopelessly evil social order.

"Democracy," "social service," "the state,"—these words represent a field in which a constantly increasing number of men are working with deepening devotion and ever-enlarging ideals. Among these men the ideals of Jesus Christ are becoming more and more dominant: his reverence for humanity, his devotion to righteousness, his principle of brotherhood, his spirit of good will transcending every division of race and class and condition, his practice of unsefish service. Some of these men are preaching in Christian pulpits, some are leaders in the industrial world or in the state, some are prophets of the pen or teachers through the living voice. They are the men who are building the true civilization. It is easy to rail at that word as premillennialists do and to make civilization mean no more than material prosperity animated by a pagan spirit. But that is not civilization. There is a Christian ideal of civilization. Men of vision are seeing it and men of devotion are slowly and yet with steady progress bodying it forth.

Lord Chief Justice Russell of England visited this country in 1896 and gave an address before the American

Bar Association. One definition which he gave then deserves remembering. "What, indeed, is true civilization? By its fruits you shall know it. It is not dominion, wealth, material luxury; nor not even a great literature and education widespread, good though these may be. Civilization is not a veneer; it must penetrate to the very heart and core and societies of men. Its true signs are thought for the poor and suffering, chivalrous regard and respect for women, the frank recognition of human brotherhood irrespective of race or color or nation or religion, the narrowing of the domain of mere force as a governing factor in the world, abhorrence of what is mean and cruel and vile, ceaseless devotion to the claims of justice." Where these ideals win their way there the rule of God is coming; and they who work to these ends are helping to bring in the Kingdom.

Premillennialism and the Church

By the church is meant here the organized and visible fellowship of the followers of Jesus, "ordained to be the visible body of Christ, to worship God through him, to promote the fellowship of his people and the ends of his kingdom, and to go into all the world and proclaim his gospel for the salvation of men and the brotherhood of all mankind."[17] The church is not perfect any more than are the members who compose this fellowship. It is not the kingdom of God, for the kingdom of God is simply the rule of God and as such is present wherever the will of God is done in the life of men. But this fellowship of Christ's followers is the center of God's

[17] From the Cambridge Declaration of Faith adopted by the representatives of the evangelical free churches of England.

rule and his chief instrument for bringing it in upon earth. To it God has intrusted his message of truth, in its fellowship Christian character is to be built, by it men are to be inspired to service in every walk of life.

The most notable fact in the life of the church to-day is the larger way in which it has grasped its task. It has seen that God's purpose is nothing less than to redeem the world, to make a new humanity, and that it dare not set any lesser goal for itself. It is this conception which controls modern missions. The aim of the church is a Christian China, not simply a few Christian Chinese. To that end it does not merely send evangelists, but establishes schools, founds hospitals, carries on industrial work, and trains natives to lead their people forward in every aspect of a true civilization. Typical of this new attitude was the men-and-religion movement of a few years ago. Even more significant are the "forward movements" in which various church bodies are engaged to-day. The Centenary Missionary Movement of the Methodist Churches, for example, stated its goal definitely to be "the maintaining and extending of the kingdom of God." It began with a survey of conditions, tasks, and resources at home and abroad. Educational tasks, social problems, and evangelism came equally within the purview. Methodism North and South secured not far from two hundred million dollars in gifts. Equally clear is the ideal expressed by the Presbyterian Church in its New Era Movement. The very title is a confession of faith, that God through his church here and now is bringing in a new era for men.

What has premillennialism to say to the church of to-day?

1. It declares that these hopes are vain and this program wrong. The church is to carry on missions, but it must not expect the nations to be converted. It must not expect America or any other land to be Christianized. Least of all must it expect the world to be won for Christ. Such results are out of question because God has planned otherwise. "The rallying cry of Protestantism, The World for Christ," says Dr. Haldeman in the Sunday School Times, "is a false slogan." Dr. Torrey objects to the watch-cry, "America for Christ," and "The Wide World for Christ"; these things are not possible in this dispensation.[18] It is a terrible mistake, says A. C. Gaebelein, for the church to try to convert the world. "There is in Christendom," he declares, "continual talking of 'building up the kingdom' and 'working for the kingdom,' etc., which is unscriptural."[19] We are not to preach the gospel of the kingdom or even to pray for its extension, for the kingdom cannot even commence until the Lord comes.[20] The program for our age is merely "the accomplishment of the number of God's elect."[21] God is not trying to save the world by man's "puny efforts," but simply "taking out of the world a people for his name."[22] F. C. Ottman even charges the church with a "perversion of her resources in the attempt to bring about kingdom conditions in the earth."[23] With the interesting ability to overlook inconvenient passages, Matt. 28. 19 is forgotten. The purpose of the church is not to "make disciples of all the nations."

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[18] Return of the Lord Jesus, p. 120.
[19] Harmony of the Prophetic Word, p. 119.
[20] Christian Workers Magazine, XVII, 278.
[21] Ibid. [22] Ibid., XVI, 448. [23] God's Oath, Introduction.

Missionary work has two ends: first, to win the limited number of "the elect"; second, to preach the gospel "as a witness." According to Adventist exegesis, the latter means to preach the gospel so that this fact can be used in the day of judgment against those who refuse.

Nothing could be in sharper contrast with the spirit, the hope, and the plans of the church to-day, not the worldly church of which Adventists are always speaking, but the church of Christ's devoted and earnest followers. That church is saying, "Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God." Never was there so great confidence in the power of the gospel, never such great plans or such a summons to service. The premillennial declaration is like a blow in the face of this advancing army. Take down these banners, Adventism says, on which you have written, "The World for Christ." Instead, resign yourself to the fact that the world in this age belongs to Satan. "Remember that 'the days are evil' and that the time of general conversion has not yet arrived. Thank God that any are converted at all."[24] "The real followers of the Lamb are but a little flock, nor does our Lord even hint that they will ever be a large flock until he shall come. . . . It has pleased God during these past eighteen centuries to bring comparatively a small number to the saving knowledge of the truth; and if there is a word of promise that it shall be otherwise until the end, let the word be presented."[25] The missionary ought to see "that the gathering out of the elect is his sole hope," then he would be "far less disheartened by opposition than when he vainly expected every day

[24] Ryle, Second Coming, by well-known preachers, pp. 43–45.
[25] Brookes, The Lord Cometh, pp. 309–11.

to see symptoms of national and universal conversion."[26] The whole matter is summed up in a statement quoted with approval in the introduction to the official report of the "prophetic conference" of 1878: "It does not surprise me at all to hear that the heathen are not all converted, and that believers are but a little flock in any congregation in my own land. It is precisely the state of things I expect to find. It is for the safety, happiness, and comfort of all true Christians to expect as little as possible from churches, or governments, under the present dispensation . . . to expect their good things only from Christ's Second Advent."[27]

2. But premillennialism goes farther. So far from being the agent for the saving of the world, the church itself is to grow increasingly corrupt and end in utter failure. "Christendom is apostate as well as the world, and is hastening on to her doom."[28] The organized Christian Church is to become more and more the Babylon, the Harlot City, of the book of Revelation. Her very activities, missionary and otherwise, are a ground for suspicion and criticism. "The inward corruption of the church keeps pace with her outward expansion"; the two sides go together, "the deepening of apostasy and the extension of the gospel, enormous missionary activity and enormous departures from the truth." And the church, "while decking itself in the garments of a world-harlotry, proposes to itself a plan which already the mouth of God has declared to be false," that is, the conversion of the world.[29] "So far

[26] A. Bonar, quoted by Brown, Second Advent, p. 317.
[27] Premillennial Essays, pp. 6, 7. [28] Prophetic Studies, p. 41.
[29] West, The Thousand Years, see pp. 442–44, 278, 279.

from holding out any hope that the church during his absence would convert the world, the Son of God makes it plain that the church will fail by the way. . . . When he comes the faith once for all delivered to the saints will have gone from the earth."[30] Christendom is the "whore" of Revelation, chapter 17; "the end will witness all Christendom in organized and open revolt and rebellion against Almighty God."[31] At the end "the nominal Christian world will be one vast mass of baptized profession, 'a corrupt, mysterious mixture, a spiritual malformation, a masterpiece of Satan, the corruption of the truth of God, and the destroyer of the souls of men, a trap, a snare, a stumbling-block, the darkest moral blot in the universe of God.' "[32]

This denunciation of the church is common to all premillennial groups. It is most pronounced, perhaps, in those who have formed separate organizations, like the Plymouth Brethren, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the followers of Dowie and Russell, but it is also true of the non-denominational Adventism which we have been primarily discussing. It is clearly to be distinguished from the work of prophet and preacher, who have always pointed out the sins of God's people and summoned them to repentance. So far from being a summons to the church to repentance and reformation, if these were to come they would disprove the Adventist scheme. It is in that scheme that the reason for such indiscriminate denunciation lies; the church *must* be evil and *must* grow worse or premillennialism is a mistaken theory. Driven

[30] Haldeman, Ten Sermons, p. 180.
[31] Pink, The Redeemer's Return, pp. 336, 349.
[32] Prophetic Studies, p. 170.

by this theory, it is natural for men to disparage the good and to look for the evil. A Pharisaic spirit tends to rise from the sharp distinction made between the little group of elect saints (to which, of course, the premillennialists belong) and the corrupt mass of the church. It is good soil for growing suspicion and criticism; it is certainly not the soil from which would spring naturally a loyal, earnest, and enthusiastic devotion to the church, or the spirit of a broad and kindly Christian fellowship such as Paul proclaims. In the wide range of premillennial literature it would be hard to find a discussion of the church that was not critical, or any straightforward effort to set forth the good which the church was accomplishing.

3. All this makes plain why the spirit of division and separation so commonly goes with Adventism. Many pastors will witness to the results in a congregation when a small group is convinced that the church as a whole is corrupt and that they alone hold the true doctrine. Often this has resulted in separatist movements, and it is interesting to note how many of the minor religious groups that have gone off in the last century are Adventist in doctrine. Within the churches there is an increasing tendency for the premillennial element to form organizations within the organization, making premillennialism the supreme doctrinal test, though joining with it other articles, like that of verbal inspiration and literal infallibility of the Bible. Independent missions and churches are established. In one prominent church which has gradually come under the control of premillennial leadership, a paper was circulated requiring Sunday-school teachers and officers to declare their belief

in premillennialism. A mission board which has been sending its premillennial candidates to one field is now facing the situation arising from the fact that, with these in control, new arrivals who do not hold the doctrine are "frozen out." A prominent premillennialist issues a summons for the formation of a "Protestant Evangelical League," a leading object of which is to draw a line through the churches and to refuse fellowship to those who do not hold certain doctrines such as the infallibility of the Scriptures, a literal physical resurrection, and the Second Coming.[33]

With this dogmatism, there goes very often the attack upon the character and motives of those who differ. In the article just referred to a vigorous assault is made upon Protestant ministers who will not accept the ideal of orthodoxy as there conceived. It is not, however, a discussion of doctrine, but an assault upon character. "Traitors," "blasphemers," "Judas Iscariots," "assassins of Christ," are among the terms applied. This, of course, is by no means true of all premillennialists, but it is distressingly common. The typical premillennial evangelist, sending Darwin and Huxley to hell because they taught evolution, is a good example. Another is afforded by Dr. R. A. Torrey in his reply to the pamphlet in which Dr. Shailer Mathews gave his criticism of premillennialism. Dean Mathews' pamphlet is an incisive discussion of ideals; Dr. Torrey deals largely in personal abuse. "Prejudice," "falsehoods," "intellectual trickster," "blasphemer," "sneaking and cowardly infidel method," "deliberately, intentionally unfair"—these are the phrases which Dr. Torrey employs.

[33] Christian Workers Magazine, XVII, 16ff.

By its spirit and its attitude premillennialism thus stands in the way of another of the great movements of to-day—that which seeks the closer relation of Christian bodies for the extension of Christ's kingdom. The increasing emphasis of these movements in recent years has been upon the fact that religion is a life before it is a theory, that we can get together most quickly and effectively by joining in a common task, and that that task is to promote Christian fellowship and bring in the kingdom of God. Our consideration of Adventism shows its lack of sympathy with all this. The writer has never seen a premillennial reference to any of these movements which was not disparaging and critical. Characteristic is Dr. C. I. Scofield's declaration made at the 1914 "prophetic conference": "that is the great word to-day: 'Get together, get together, get together,' and always on the basis of doing something, not believing something; and it is a very seductive cry. But thank God, the Lord knows them that are his."[34]

The Appeal of Modern Premillennialism

What, then, is the appeal which enables this doctrine to persist in our day and to win the faith of many earnest and devout souls? Two or three of these elements can be suggested here; something more is indicated in the section which follows.

The letter of the Bible is the first and perhaps the strongest basis of its appeal. The unhistorical and mechanical theory of verbal inspiration still holds large numbers of people, and to this the appeal is made by this modern premillennialism, just as it is, for example,

[34] The Coming and Kingdom of Christ, p. 177.

by Pastor Russell's followers. The leadership of the church almost everywhere holds a saner, a more historical and spiritual view of the Bible. But the church has been neglecting her teaching function, particularly in the pulpit. Until the laity are brought to a truer conception of the Bible and its use, they will remain the prey of the last glib quoter of texts who can support his special dogmatic scheme with endless verbal citations from the Bible.

Another element of strength is the deep sense of the evil of the world and the feeling of the hopelessness of the struggle against it which weighs upon many minds. It is for this reason that apocalypticism flourishes especially in times of darkness. A calamity like the World War brings on a revival for this reason as well as because it seems to be one of the signs of still greater events to come.

In the third place, premillennialism offers a very dramatic appeal to faith and imagination. It does in theology what the Roman Catholic Church does with its ritual; it appeals to those who must see in order to believe. It is easier to see God in tempest and earthquake and fire than to hear the still small voice. Men still cry, "O that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down." It is hard to see God working in his world. It is hard to trust the quietly working forces of truth. That is why even in a democracy like ours men raise the cry, "Treat 'em rough." The defenders of the existing order are wont to make the appeal to "direct action" about as quickly as the revolutionists. And premillennialism offers a theology of "direct action" on God's part that the common man can understand who

grows impatient with the slow movement of the more spiritual forces. How much more assuring this dramatic promise is, and how much more tangible!—the visible return of a great conqueror, an encounter of mighty armies, the triumph of invincible forces, a rule with army and scepter and throne, and the triumph of saints who sit upon thrones. The obverse side of this remains true also; premillennialism flourishes where men lose faith in the adequacy of moral and spiritual forces over against the tremendous task of making a new world. It is thus true that faith and pessimism go side by side.

A final source of strength with premillennialism as with apocalypticism generally is in its protest against worldliness and compromise of all kinds. It is not easy to dominate the natural world by the moral and spiritual life, and for the individual Christian and the church there is the constant danger of accommodation and concession. One-sided as it may be, apocalypticism at its best stands as a protest against evil. By its condemnation of this world and its declaration of an ideal world beyond, it brings out the irreconcilable opposition between the worlds of good and evil. Where the church becomes indifferent and worldly, where it loses its faith in the possibility of a new world and seems content to accept evil as a permanent and irremediable element, there premillennialism has gained by its denunciation of evil and the declaration of its final doom.

Elements of Truth in Premillennialism

There is no form of belief which has held sway over men for centuries, recurring again and again, which has not in it elements of truth. And this applies to pre-

millennialism not simply in that which it shares with other interpretations of Christianity, but in that which is more distinctive of it. Some of this is intimated in what has just been said; a few other points may here be added:

1. The emphasis on the transcendental idea of God. With all its one-sidedness it corrects an equal danger, that in emphasizing the indwelling God who works through man and through law, we may lose the great vision of One who is more than this world, who reigns supreme within it. The final hope of man is in no inherent power of natural evolution, but in the redeeming power of the merciful and holy God.

2. The emphasis on the idea of God as the God of history and of the nations, moving in the tide of human affairs and with a purpose that runs through the ages.

3. The emphasis on the God of Judgment, visiting the consequences of sin and faithlessness not only upon individuals in the distant future, but here in this world upon the nations.

4. The insistence upon the fact of evil, upon its extent and its significance. Evil is not the shadow of the good, it is not mere weakness nor passing ignorance. It is a power that must be faced and can be overcome only in conflict. Such conflict must persist till evil is overthrown, for the opposition between the two is absolute. And there is a kingdom of evil. Evil is more than individual wrong of an inner spirit in the single man. It is a power that exists in institutions and relations and widespreading social influences, above all in the dominance of false ideals and a wrong spirit.

5. In the overthrow of evil and the establishment of the good, there is room for crisis as well as growth, for

revolutions and epochs as well as for quiet development.

The fuller treatment of these truths must come in connection with the constructive outline of the Christian hope which follows. Only the setting of the larger discussion can give them their real meaning as against the one-sided assertion which they have in current premillennial teaching.

PART III

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

CHAPTER IX

BIBLICAL TEACHING AND THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

Fundamental Truths

In determining our doctrine of the Christian hope we take up first the question of the Bible teaching and how it is to be used. There is a conception of the Bible that would give a very simple answer to this question. It is the idea that the Bible is a textbook of doctrine which was dictated word by word by God. Such a theory misrepresents the character of the Bible, and mistakes the nature of religion and of God's dealings with men. By insisting on the inspired and therefore infallible letter, it places all the Bible essentially on the same level, and we have seen how this resulted in premillennialism in the loss of the distinctive Christian elements in the future hope while the Judaism of an earlier and lower age came to the fore. It is necessary then, before we go further, that we grasp clearly certain fundamental principles as to the Christian revelation and its bearing upon the Christian hope. Here are four truths that are basic for our later study:

1. The kingdom of God in Christian thought is the great purpose of God and the goal of human history. Because God is good this rule of his will be the highest good of men. Because God is personal spirit this government of his in its fulfillment will be not the compulsion of an outward force, but the sway of an indwelling and controlling Spirit in the hearts and lives of men.

2. In order that there may be such a spiritual rule men must know God. God's revelation of himself is always the condition of the coming of his rule. That would not be necessary if God's rule were by sheer power, and if man had only blindly to submit. But if God is to rule within, then man must know and trust.

3. This revelation, which is simply God showing himself to man, answers man's two great questions. The first is, What must I do, what kind of a man must I be? He who really sees God has found the answer to that: the Spirit of God is to be the rule of our life; we are to be sons of our Father. The second question is, What may I hope for? And the answer to that too depends wholly upon what God is. If we know what kind of a God we have, then we know what help we may hope for now, and what kind of a world the future will bring.

4. And knowing this kind of a God, we know too what religion is. Religion is a personal fellowship with God in the unity of Spirit and life. Such a religion will bring forth its creeds, and form its organization, and find its forms of worship. But creed and church and ritual are expressions of this religion, not the religion itself. Religion is a personal relation. On God's side it is the gracious giving of himself to be known and possessed. On man's side it involves a self-surrendering faith, in which man gives himself to God, receives God, and lives his life in the Spirit given to him of God.

Here, then, is the great need: if the rule of God is to come upon earth, God must show himself to men, men must know God. It is the Christian conviction that he has thus revealed himself. We need to ask, then, In what manner has God made himself known?

The Revelation of God

It might seem a very simple and obvious answer to say that God has revealed himself through the Bible, but the answer does not go far enough. True, he who will go to the Bible with open mind and earnest heart will find God speaking to him; but the Bible itself is at the end, not at the beginning, so far as God's revelation of himself is concerned. There is a long history that lies back of this. These writings come from many ages: how did they come to be? Why, among many Christian writings, were just these gathered together which we find in our New Testament? Why did we take over those which the Jewish Church had thus selected? We cannot consider all these questions here, but they must be kept in mind as against the tendency to think of the Bible as the point at which we start, as a completed whole with no questions lying back of it. We have not answered the question, how did God reveal himself? by pointing to the Bible. How did this Bible come to be, and in what way is God revealed in it?

There are two ways conceivably that God could have taken in revealing himself. He might, himself remaining hidden, have given men information about himself, or at intervals wrought some outstanding deed in which men might see his purpose and his power. And this information and the story of these deeds he might have caused men to write down for those who came later. And to all this he might have added instruction as to conduct and worship and perhaps some veiled account of the future so written that its meaning would become clear only as it was fulfilled by the event. It is in this way that some men have conceived God's revelation.

They have made it first of all a book revelation. As such it is clearly a revelation about God rather than a revelation of God himself. It is not so much the living God whom men come personally to see and know, but a sum of ideas about God and of rules for men laid down by him. Such a revelation clearly is not adequate to the kind of religion which we have been considering. It makes of religion a matter of belief on the one hand and obedience to command on the other. But the religion of which we have been speaking demands more. Man must know God in personal fellowship and God himself as thus known by his Spirit must enter into man's life. This alone is the religion of the spirit and this is the Christian faith.

There is, however, a second way which God might take. Instead of giving men teaching about himself or prescriptions laid down by himself, he might make himself known to men directly in the experience of life. Revelation becomes thus not intellectual but vital. Redemption itself becomes the means of revelation; men know God by the very deeds by which God comes into saving relation with them. Such is the Christian conception, and such is the picture of the method of God which the Bible itself gives us, the Bible which is the monument of this redeeming self-revealing of God.

It is important that we grasp this idea clearly. We begin not with a set of writings, but with the thought of a living God. Christianity has a book, but it is not a book religion. Mohammedanism is a book religion; so are Mormonism and Christian Science. Each of these began with a book, and the book is not only supreme

but sole. The Christian religion, whether studied in the New Testament or traced back through the Old, begins with the living God. It was here as a living faith before the writings appeared, and the writings themselves sprang from the faith. We believe in the living God who dwells, and has ever dwelt, among men. This God has shown himself to men, not by words that he has dictated but in the experiences of life. He has spoken to men in their sorrows, as to a Hosea of old whose vision of the mercy of God came to him in the wreck of his own home life. He has spoken to men through their joys, their sense of deep dependence and of mercies undeserved, and they have cried out:

"Bless Jehovah, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits."

He has shown himself in the history of nations. In their blessings they have heard him say:

"I am Jehovah, thy God,
Who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

And in their national reverses they have heard the stern voice of rebuke and caught a vision of the God who cares not for ritual but for righteousness. But always this revealing of God to men is in human experience. It comes not in words and commands given from without but in inner conviction and knowledge. Spiritualism may use its mechanical means, its tables and ouija boards and unconscious mediums; but God uses living, knowing, conscious, believing men.

Such, then, is the method of God's revelation of himself and this in turn determines the nature of man's knowledge of God as this appears in the Bible.

1. The experience in which men know God is both divine and human. There is here true inspiration, God's Spirit in man as the source of truth and life. But the life is man's life and the truth is held in man's consciousness. The presence of God means not less of man but more—more of knowledge, love, vision, strength; he is not a half-conscious instrument marking down that which he only half understands.

2. Because God reveals himself thus in human life and experience, the revelation will be gradual. Life has its epochs, but its process is always that of growth. Revelation and redemption are inseparable. The revelation is not only for the end of redemption, but it is through redemption and is a part of it. The knowledge and the life go on together, and both are matters of growth.

3. We must distinguish between the experience in which men thus know God and the form in which it is expressed. Men use the forms of thought which belong to themselves and to their day. The experience of God and the knowledge of God must not be denied because it is clothed in forms that can no longer be used.

The Nature and Use of the Bible

All this we must keep in mind when we come to the Bible. Men have set up their theory of what the Bible should be, and their passionate defense of the Bible has often been simply a zealous contention for their theory. They have said that because the Bible was the revelation of God each word of it must come from God and be infallible. The misuse of the Bible has come from this error. God's method has been to show himself to men

by giving himself to men in a living experience. The Bible is the record and monument of that experience. As we read it we see this life of God in men, we read the words of men who seek to set forth for others the meaning of that life and their vision of God, and we ourselves see God in these pages and hear him speak to us through these words.

With such a Bible clearly the old verbal method of its use is impossible, and equally that dogmatic-intellectual method which treated it as a repository of doctrine. It is the book of life, the book of faith, the book of God, and we must use it as such.

1. We must use it as a book of faith and for faith. Theology and philosophy ask many questions; faith has but one interest and that is God. To treat the Bible as an inspired encyclopedia, meeting our curiosity about all manner of matters present and future, is to mistreat it. The one thing that is needful is that we shall know God; what else we need is given in that. That is what revelation is, the self-showing of God. That is the purpose of God, and that was the passion of those great souls whose words we have here. And as we study these men, that is what we must look for: their vision of God, the center of their faith. What Paul thought about woman's silence in the church or the covering for her head is of little import to us. The authority of Paul's message is in that vision of God, righteous and merciful, revealed to men in Christ and known by him in his own life.

2. We must recognize variety in the Bible. That follows because it is a book of real human experience. The God who is present here does not override men,

he speaks through them. Each out of his own life and times, and in his own manner of thought and speech, sets forth his faith in God.

3. We must recognize differences and progress. The ethics of Joshua and Judges cannot all be followed to-day. There are ideals there which Jesus specifically repudiated. But that does not mean that the Israel of that day had not gained some knowledge of God and was not seeking to follow him.

4. We must put Christ central and supreme. Loyalty to the letter has often meant betrayal of Jesus. It may be said of some of these writings, as of the systems of our day,

> "They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

The heart of all revelation is the vision of God. All that preceded him must be judged in the light of the Spirit of God as he has become manifest to us in Jesus Christ. The supreme Christian confession is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is, then, a double task that rests upon us in our study of the Bible and this is well illustrated in connection with the doctrine of the Christian hope. First of all there must be the historical study. We must ask what a given writing meant in the mind of its author and for the people of his time. Such a need would seem perfectly obvious, but it has been constantly disregarded, and the modern student of the Bible who insists upon it has often been misunderstood. In this discussion of the Christian hope the demand has been disregarded both by premillennialists and by their opponents who insisted upon a "spiritual" interpretation. The latter,

when confronted with apocalyptic passages like some in the gospels, have evaded the plain meaning because they did not fit into their doctrine, and have rightly incurred the premillennial criticism. The premillennialists, as we have seen, have done the same, following the allegorizers and typologists of an earlier day. They have talked of types and symbols, giving free rein to fancy. They have talked of prophets who knew but a part of what they were writing, they themselves pointing out the rest of the meaning. They have felt free to divide and to combine, adjusting passages to their own ideas and programs. They have imported into passages meanings which these could not have had for those who first heard them, nor, indeed, for those who wrote them. And their citations of proof texts are a strange combination, taken from all sources and all ages, with little pretense of historical understanding. Now, as the Reformers saw and as modern scholarship clearly understands, there is only one way to escape the arbitrary, fanciful, irresponsible use of the Bible and that is by sober and strict historical study. The conclusions may not always be to our liking, but the first need is a simple regard for the historical facts.

Turn for illustration of this to our study of the Christian hope. We have noted that the full truth was not present from the beginning. The faith was there from the earliest prophets, the faith in a God of righteousness whose rule was coming in the earth; but that faith had its limitations. Only slowly did it move toward the larger and more spiritual truth. Only rarely was the thought grasped that God had an equal concern for all nations. Often there was the emphasis upon the national

instead of the universal, upon the political instead of the ethical and spiritual. Sometimes the prophets saw at the end of the road only Israel and her rule and her rebuilt temple and restored sacrifices. It was, of course, a renewed and purified Israel, but the vision was far from reaching the scope or purity of Christian thought. And there were darker features, too, in the spirit of vengeance, in pictures of slaughter, sometimes in the rejoicing over visions of anguish and death that were to come to Israel's foes. Here was the spirit which Jesus definitely repudiated, even though there were words of ancient law in which it was set forth. It is our first duty honestly to face these facts, thanking God for a fulfillment greater than these visions.

But this historical study is only the preliminary. Our second task is to see the faith that is expressed in these forms of the past, to feel its power, and to gain its message. That is what the ordinary reader of the Bible does who seeks for spiritual help and does not care for historical problems. And necessary as the historical study is in its place, the method of the ordinary reader is quite justified. When he reads the Psalms he passes over the vindictive passages. He applies to the church, or to God's people generally, what is here said about Israel. He turns the physical into spiritual. At the same time he passes by altogether those writings which bear no message to him. He reads such a book as Revelation because in its broad meaning he gains a vision of the glory and power of God, of the certain end of evil, and the sure triumph of good. And what is said of the new earth or the heavenly world he takes in a general and spiritual sense. For some men this method

would be wholly wrong. If you believe that every word in these writings was dictated by God, then you are bound to do two things to find the exact meaning of each word, and to accept every word for exactly what it means. For us, however, this is not a collection of dictated messages. It is the book of man's faith and of God's living presence, it is the story of God finding his way into human experience. And so our important and final task with it is to discern the faith and to see God.

And that is not hard to do. Turn to the Old Testament; limitations there are here or we should not have needed the perfect Light that shone upon a later day. But here, surely, is God speaking to men. The fuller Christian truth may make plain the limitation, but it enables us to see the truth as well. Here were men that faced a world in which evil seemed triumphant, and yet they had seen God high and lifted up, and they did not doubt his final triumph. They lived at a time when God and nation seemed inseparable, each people for its God, each God for his people. They proclaimed the God who was first the God of righteousness before he was God of Israel. The judgment was not to fall upon the foes of one nation but upon the evil of every nation; and the mercy of God included all in its purpose. When we turn to the writers of the New Testament we must do the same. The immediate future brought no fall of Rome as the seer of the book of Revelation expected, but his vision of the God of righteousness enthroned above every earthly empire, no matter how proud and defiant, still abides with us. The expectation on the part of the early church of a speedy and visible return

of Jesus to set up his kingdom was not fulfilled. But the faith of the early church remains our faith: it is the God of Jesus Christ who bears all rule and whose will shall yet be done on earth.

Prophecy and Prediction

The position just developed takes, it is clear, a very different view of the predictive element in the Bible from that assigned to it by premillennial writers. According to these, the distinctive element in prophecy seems to be prediction, and the two words are often used as synonymous. Prophecy becomes simply history written in advance. "Prophecy a Chronometer" is the way Nathanael West heads one section of his volume on The Thousand Years. According to this view, the great work of the prophets seems to have been, first, to give an outline of events before they occurred and, second, by reference to various items, almost always of incidental character, to supply a system of "proofs" for later times through the argument of fulfillment. This theory of literal fulfillment is vital to premillennialism. The argument given by William Miller, founder of the Adventist movement, is repeated by all modern premillennialists. It runs thus. At Christ's first advent certain predictions were literally fulfilled: the virgin birth, the forerunner as one crying in the wilderness, the birthplace of Bethlehem, etc. Since these were literally fulfilled, all other predictions of the Old Testament will be literally fulfilled. Jesus, therefore, must return to earth to set up as king of the Jews the kind of visible, political reign which is there constantly spoken of.

Now, there are certain difficulties with this conception

that are rarely considered by its adherents. The first has to do with the fulfillment of prophecy. There are two ways of looking for prophetic fulfillment. There is that which looks at the spiritual faith and moral ideals of the prophets. On the whole this has been the ruling conception of the Christian Church. We see in Jesus the fulfillment of the Old Testament, not because of the coincidence of details, but because the prophetic ideals were consummated and, indeed, surpassed in him. This view is not primarily concerned with the form in which the prophet put his hope of the future, and correspondence in such form is wholly secondary. The second is the predictive view referred to above. Here the literal fulfillment is essential, and if it fails at one point the whole argument breaks down. Now, this literal fulfillment has not, in fact, thus appeared. "Though Jeremiah had promised that after seventy years (25. 11; 29. 10) Israel should be restored to their own land (24. 5, 6), and there enjoy the blessings of the Messianic kingdom under the Messianic King (23. 5, 6), this period had passed by, and things remained as of old. A similar expectation was cherished by Ezekiel, but this no more than that of Jeremiah was destined to be fulfilled. Next, Haggai and Zechariah promised that, when the temple was rebuilt, the Davidic kingdom should be reestablished and the glories of the Messianic time. The temple was presently rebuilt, but the kingdom failed to appear" (Charles, Eschatology, p. 187).

The second difficulty with this literal prediction theory of the prophets, and its assumption that the scheme of history has been foretold, is that it always requires a special key for interpretation. This reinterpretation of

prophecies and their figures began very early. In Daniel, for example, "the writer (9. 25–27) interprets the seventy years of Jeremiah as seventy weeks of years —490 years. Since sixty-nine and a half of these had already expired, there were only three and a half years to run before the destruction of the Greek power and the consummation of the theocracy." A similar theory is found in the apocalyptic work of 1 Enoch, chapters 83–90, where the seventy years are taken to mean the seventy reigns of the seventy angels who rule over the nations (Charles, Eschatology, pp. 187, 188). This reinterpretation of figures has gone on constantly ever since. And the reinterpreted figures have always yielded the same result, namely, that the establishment of the kingdom was to come in a very few years from the time of this latest interpreter. Every one of these writers has a "key," every one of them is certain as to his results, but scarcely any two of them have ever agreed. In all cases there is an insistence upon the letter, then an appeal to symbolic meanings and values which finally achieves the result it desires. In case of failure the result can even be revised, as was done by William Miller.

Further, such a view of Scripture and of prophecy makes inspiration a mechanical affair. Inspiration is not found in a great vital experience. Where words and figures are somehow given to a writer which he himself cannot understand (see previous discussion of premillennial theories), there you have inspiration reduced to the mechanical level. And as we have already seen, history itself becomes mechanical with its events and epochs all marked out; God becomes the great Absolute, man the passive instrument.

Finally, this view leads away from the great spiritual principles and realities to the incidental if not trivial. The argument from fulfillment in relation to Jesus appeals to the external and incidental, rather than to his teachings, his character, and his power with men. A curious example of this method of conceiving prediction in prophecy may be found with Wimberly, Behold the Morning. One whole chapter is devoted to a discussion of the automobile as the fulfillment of Nahum 2. 3, 4. "The prophecy," says the author, "mentioned as the caption of this chapter, is of such extraordinary importance it seems advisable to discuss it further than a mere mention" (p. 96).

Is there, then, prediction in prophecy? Yes, and necessarily so. In the truest conception the prophet may be called preacher. Like the true preacher, he was a man who had seen God. That was always the beginning: "I saw the Lord high and lifted up." The meaning of that vision he proclaimed to the men of his day. His message was always for his time; he was not a writer of history in advance to be puzzled out by future generations. But because his God was righteous and ruled, therefore his message had meaning for the future, and that meaning he pointed out, summoning men now to rejoice and trust, oftener to repent and turn from their ways if they would avoid the judgment of God.

Such declarations concerning the future rested directly upon great moral principles with nothing accidental or arbitrary about them, but the prophets put them in concrete form. Often because they were statesmen and men of affairs, knowing intimately the larger world of

their day, these declarations took definite shape in specific allusions. The prophet does not simply say that the wages of sin is death, nor yet merely that Israel shall be punished because of her sins. He cries out: "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation" (Isa. 10. 5). The prophets too were poets. What the Revised Version has done with the Psalms should be done with large sections of the prophets, they should be printed in the form which poetry demands. The prophet does not baldly say, there shall be universal peace when the Messiah reigns; he declares that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." He pictures the joy of the coming day and says: "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

The Fulfillment of Prophecy

With all this in mind we should learn how to appreciate and use these prophetic utterances. We look for the evidence of God's presence in what is moral and spiritual, not what is incidental and external. What Jeremiah had in mind certainly did not take place after the lapse of the seventy years, but Jeremiah's vision of God we know as true, as also his message that such a God must punish sin, and that such a God will forgive and restore and carry out his great ends. How different was Jesus from the warlike hero to whom some had looked forward as deliverer! But as we read the Old Testament, as we ponder not only these writers but the Jeremiah who writes of the new covenant and the great prophet who speaks of the suffering servant, we see how

the highest in the Old Testament points to Jesus and how Jesus transcends even that highest.

On the whole this is the attitude of the men of the New Testament. It is true that they appealed, in their apologetic, to details of prophetic prediction, but they did not let themselves be hampered here by any bonds of literalism. Historically and critically, the premillennialists are quite right: the prophets were not thinking of the Christian Church when they spoke of the coming kingdom of Israel, and by the triumph over their foes they did not mean spiritual victories but political supremacy. But they cannot escape the plain fact that Paul did exactly that to which they so vigorously object: he disregarded the literal meaning, seized the moral principle, and applied these declarations of coming blessing to the Christian Church. The circumcised Israelite is displaced by the disciple of any race who is circumcised in heart. Abraham becomes "the father of us all." "I will call that my people, which was not my people," he quotes from Hosea. The Christians one and all are "heirs according to promise," and the true seed of Abraham (Rom. 2. 28, 29; 4. 11–16; 9. 6–8, 25, 26; 2 Cor. 6. 16–18; Gal. 3. 7, 16, 28, 29; 4. 27, 28; Phil. 3. 3). The passage in Joel 2 is certainly Messianic, and as certainly its details of a physical character were not fulfilled at Pentecost. The sun was not turned to darkness nor the moon to blood, nor were there signs of blood and fire and vapor and smoke. But Luke reports Peter as quoting this passage in full and declaring of the Pentecost experience, "This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel" (Acts 2. 16–21). To this all may be added the example of our Lord. Upon

two distinct occasions Jesus refers to the Messianic passage in the first part of Isaiah 61 (Matt. 11. 4, 5; Luke 4. 17–21). In one case it is in answer to the query of John: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" The other occasion is when he reads the passage in the synagogue at Nazareth and specifically declares: "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Neither the passage as a whole nor these few verses had been fulfilled in the narrowly literal sense upon which these champions of the literal predictive theory insist, and certainly not what was originally in the mind of the writer. But Jesus knows that in the deepest sense the truth of this writing and the purpose of God had come to realization in him. (On the whole subject of prophecy and prediction see the thorough and helpful treatment in Prophecy and Authority, by Professor Kemper Fullerton.)

I Believe in the Holy Ghost

We have been considering the twofold obligation of the student in his use of the Bible for the study of the Christian hope. The first task was historical and critical, to determine the meaning of each writing for its day. The second was positive and constructive, to find beneath the incidental form the enduring principles that should enter into our doctrine. In this second task our guide is the spirit and message of Jesus, and the source of our doctrine will be the character of God as revealed in Jesus.

There is now a third consideration to which we must turn. The church has always confessed her faith in the Holy Spirit of God. She has not always appreciated the meaning of that faith. For our study it has most

important meanings. And the first meaning is this: We cannot know the living God of the past except through the Spirit of the living God present with us. Not only of the words of Jesus, but of every word of God spoken through whatever prophet of the past it is true: "He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." There are men who fear that when the infallible letter is given up the certainty of truth is lost to them. But the infallible letter, if we had it, would of itself be dead and impotent. They have forgotten the living Spirit. It is by the Spirit of God, and thus alone, that we can discern the truth of the Scripture, and it is by this that we learn to choose and leave. The truth was well put by the late Marcus Dods: "Who is at the reader's elbow as he peruses Exodus and Leviticus to tell him what is of permanent authority and what is for the Mosaic economy only? Who whispers as we read Genesis and Kings, 'This is exemplary; this is not'? Who sifts for us the speeches of Job, and enables to treasure up as divine truth what he utters in one verse, while we reject the next as Satanic ravings? Who gives the preacher authority and accuracy of aim to pounce on a sound text in Ecclesiastes, while wisdom and folly toss and roll over one another in confusingly rapid and inextricable contortions? What enables the humblest Christian to come safely through the cursing Psalms and go straight to forgive his enemy?" (Quoted by F. C. Eiselen in a volume helpful for this whole discussion, The Christian View of the Old Testament.)

There is a second important aspect of this doctrine. The living and redeeming God is moving in his world to-day. His work is not all of the past. His purposes

are being carried out through these centuries. History is a revealer and a teacher as truly now as when Israel looked forth upon the nations from the walls of Jerusalem. And the church that has within it the Spirit of God may discern God's presence and know the unfolding of his purposes. There is no place where this truth needs to be realized more than in connection with the doctrine of the Christian hope. The more elaborate the programs of the future, the further removed have they usually been from the Christian message. Here is a point where omniscient dogmatism is least in place, where there is most need of humility, teachableness, and the spirit of trust and obedience that is willing to follow God and to leave the more distant future with him.

There are some things that we must learn concerning God's will from his movement in history. Looking back, we can see how men of old learned from the progress of events and how the church herself has been taught by the movement of these centuries. Her early hopes have changed; it was not God's will that the kingdom should be established in the manner she once dreamed. Apocalypticism was once the natural, almost inevitable form taken by the faith in a living and righteous God. The passage of the years has made it an anachronism, and those who hold it do so only by shutting their eyes to God's tuition through history, by ruling God out of these centuries.

CHAPTER X

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

God and the Christian Hope

Every religion has in some measure these three factors: a faith, a hope, and a task. First of all, there is a faith, a conviction that somewhere there is a Power higher than man and One on whom he depends. There is always, secondly, an element of hope, that man may somehow expect help from this Being. And, finally, there is the aspect of duty, a task that waits, an obligation to be fulfilled.

These elements of religion do not exist side by side without special relation to each other. They form a unity and the center is the thought of God. It is what we think of God that determines the duty, what we shall be and do. And what God is determines what we may hope for. We must grasp that first of all as we study the Christian hope. There is just one ground for the Christian hope, and that is our confidence in that God in whom we trust. There is but one source to determine just what that hope will be. It rests not upon a scheme of ideas pieced together from here and there in the Bible. It does not depend upon some predicted outline of events. We are not disturbed because no one consistent outline like this is furnished us by the Bible. What we found throughout the Bible was nowhere a painful agreement upon any such system as some men seek to-day; it was, rather, a great hope of deliverance,

differing constantly in detail of form but resting back upon vision of God. Because we know this God to-day, because he speaks to us through these pages, because we know that his power will move on to victory, because we know that his righteousness will overcome evil, because we see that his mercy means our good, therefore do we hold our Christian hope. But this God in whom we trust is for us above all the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the final ground of our hope as it is the heart of our faith. In this God revealed in Jesus Christ we have found the answer to man's first great question: "What can I know?" And with that we have the answer to our second cry: "What may I hope for?" It is in Jesus Christ that we see that character of God which is our trust. In his attitude toward men and his work for them we see the gracious purpose of God. And in the method of Jesus, revealed in his word and life and death, we catch a vision of how God is going to redeem this world and fulfill humanity's hope.

The Threefold Hope

In Christian thought the hope always means at least these two things: the will of God and the good of man; or, stated otherwise, the rule of God and the salvation of man; and these two things are one, each given in the other. Three aspects, however, may be distinguished in this coming rule of God which is the longed for good of man. We may think of it first from the individual standpoint in relation to this life. Here it is the hope of holiness, of the achievement of character, of the largest life. It is not simply negative, the deliverance from sin; it is, above all, positive. There is a life that we have

not achieved. There is a character that is not yet won. We have caught in Christ the vision of an ideal, and we dare not set our hope lower than that. It is our hope that we may attain "unto . . . a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we may . . . grow up in all things into him who is the head." And because God is such a God, because he is faithful through whom we were called, we are confident again with Paul, that he who began the good work in us will perfect it.

In its second aspect the Christian hope reaches out beyond the individual and inner life to the world life as a whole. This too rests clearly and solely upon our vision of God and our trust in him. In the world that we know evil persists and holds great power, righteousness is thwarted, and the good suffer. That does not correspond with the power of God or with his purpose, and so we look forward to a rule of God in all the earth that will mean righteousness and mercy and peace.

But the rule of God on earth cannot represent God's full purpose or man's final good. We think of the generations past, faithful and true, who saw no such consummation. We think of human life here at its best as cut off in its plans, thwarted in its highest purposes. And always, because it is joined to a mortal body, our life on earth will mean in the end age, weakness, death, separation. Again we rest our hope, not upon the pictures with which imagination has clothed the confidence of faith. But because we believe in such a God, the Father who has called us into fellowship with himself, who has poured out his life that man might have life with him, we believe that God will not sever this fellowship or suffer this life of man to perish.

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just."

Tennyson stands here where Paul stood: "God is faithful." And so we hope for an eternal, heavenly world in which God's purposes shall be fully and finally achieved.

The Kingdom of God

The second part of this threefold hope, the hope of a new world here in time, has not received justice from Christian thinkers. There are various reasons for this, as our historical survey has shown. It appeared in the early church in inadequate apocalyptic form. The hope itself was not realized, and fell more and more into the hands of extremists like the Montanists whom the church as a whole repudiated. The Roman Catholic Church made the error of seeing in the church the realization of the hope of God's kingdom on earth, and Protestantism followed largely in this error. The Reformation, however, conceived of salvation mainly as an individual and inner experience, and the great kingdom hope with which the synoptic Gospels echo was almost lost sight of. Two movements, radically contrasted, have sought to supply this defect. The one has been the modern so-called social gospel, in which there joined the influence of Kant and Ritschl, the result of a new study of the prophets and the synoptic Gospels, the larger place given to the teachings of Jesus, and an effort to answer with a Christian message the pressing social summons of the day. The movement has not been without its defects. It has failed often to see the eschatological

form in which the gospel message is given in the synoptics, and its emphasis on the ethical has sometimes obscured the heart of the Christian hope in its dependence upon God. The other effort is that of modern premillennialism. It has retained the larger ideal of a world redemption, a rule of God that shall mean not merely saved men but a new earth. It has seen too the eschatological elements in the New Testament. But it has taken the apocalyptic form and tried to make of it the substance of the Christian hope. It has left Christian history to one side as without organic relation to the coming kingdom. It has missed the through and through ethical and social meaning of the kingdom, and so has misconceived both its nature and the method of its coming.

Throughout our discussion we have used the phrase "kingdom of God" to describe the Christian hope. It is true that the phrase is not contained in the Old Testament and that its real source is the Jewish apocalyptic. The word "kingdom," however, is joined to God in the Old Testament and the idea appears abundantly. It was the rule of Jehovah to which the prophets looked forward, and the synoptic Gospels are filled with the phrase. It has the advantage for us of all this biblical background, and in itself it expressed the great conviction of faith: the will of God is the good of man, man's hope will be fulfilled when the rule of God comes.

It is important, however, at the very beginning that we realize that, like our other words for spiritual truth, this is a figure of speech, a phrase taken from the world of human experience to set forth the reality of the unseen and eternal. Because it is a figure of speech we must

guard against its misuse. It is an analogy taken from the human, but it is only an analogy, and we must not misconceive God's kingdom by thinking of it too much in terms of the kingdoms of earth. Premillennialism makes clear enough that danger, with its pictures of visible pomp and splendor, of autocratic reign, of marching armies and slaughtered foes. Jesus himself once drew a clear contrast and pointed out this danger. "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: . . . even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 25. 25, 26).

There is another figure, which Jesus himself with unerring touch picked out of human life, which in many ways suggests more clearly the nature of the God in whom we trust, the nature of the world to which we look forward, and God's method with men in bringing it in. That is the picture of father and children. Jesus uses it constantly as furnishing the name for God and the conception of his character. We have but one passage in which he refers to God as King; the name Father as applied to God occurs sixty-three times in the synoptic Gospels, and almost twice that often in the fourth Gospel. We follow Jesus when we pray and say "Our Father," not "Our King." Son represents for us most truly what man is to be, not subject. And the best picture of the world to which we look forward is that in which men shall know God as their Father in lives of trust and devotion, and in which they shall live together as brethren in a family of mutual love and reverence and service. And beyond all pictures of throne and

temple and streets and walls in its beauty and its meaning, is the suggestion that the eternal world is the Father's home in which the children shall dwell with him (John 14. 2, marginal translation). No human speech can express all truth, for even of human things

> " . . . words, like nature, half reveal
> And half conceal the Soul within."

But this figure, taken from the human home, is the best expression that man has of divine reality; for the home, like religion, stands, first of all, for moral ideals expressed in personal relations. We shall use the phrase "kingdom of God," but we must constantly control its meaning by this better figure as expressing the teaching of Jesus about God and man.

The Twofold Rule of God

While the phrase "kingdom of God" may sometimes mean the realm over which God rules, its primary and most common sense is simply the rule of God. This rule of God is of a twofold character. It is, first of all, an external rule, that is, one that is independent of any inner understanding or obedience. As such it is absolute, unconditioned, necessary. That is true of the whole world of nature, and of man in so far as he is a part of that world. We ourselves use this rule when we deal with those who cannot understand the appeal to conscience and reason, or who will not yield to it. More or less we use this physical authority with the child, the prisoner, the insane. If pacifism be defined as the denial of the right of one person to use force with another person under any circumstances, then there never has been pacifism with God or man.

In a second and higher sense the rule of God is inner. It is a rule of freedom, not of necessity. The obedience which it secures is by the free response of another's will in answer to the summons of truth and right. It is the kind of rule that belongs in a world of persons instead of things. It may not be attainable at once, but it is always the goal. It is the aim of the father in his dealings with his son. The child who cannot understand reason may need command and constraint. But this is only provisional. The father's goal is reached only when a higher rule and authority takes place of this, when the father's ideals win the conviction of the boy, and the father's spirit lives in the boy and rules his life. It may be necessary to restrain a prisoner, but mere restraint or punishment will never make a man of him. Modern penology, therefore, adds another appeal; it seeks to awaken a new spirit, to win an inner obedience that will fit the man to go out again into the world. And everywhere we recognize that the physical rule is here only to be done away just as quickly as possible, in order that the higher rule may take its place. This higher rule marks the purpose of God with men. The glory of the heavens could not content God, despite the unerring obedience of the stars. He wanted the answer of a free obedience, of beings that could know his truth, that could see and trust and love in answer to his love, in whom his own spirit could live a larger life, who could hold fellowship with him. In this moral rule over free souls the universe finds its end and meaning.

Such a rule, of course, is pretty far removed from what is often associated with kings and kingdoms. It helps

us to see how the word "life" can take the place of the word "kingdom" in the fourth Gospel, and how the two words can be used interchangeably elsewhere (Mark 9. 45, 47). The rule of God is nothing less than the true life of man. To see the will of God and choose it for our own, to open the heart that he may rule not by outer command but by a new spirit within us which is his Spirit—that is God's rule and our life; that is equally the kingdom of God and the salvation of man. And what Paul says about salvation applies directly to this true and final kingship of God. Salvation is through man's free "Yes" given in answer to that truth of God in the gospel which has convinced his mind and soul; It is neither by compulsion nor blind obedience. By it God enters into a man's life as an indwelling Spirit, and this new spirit is at once God's rule over man and man's free life freely expressed by himself. The kingdom of God in this world comes by faith.

The Scope of the Kingdom

It was this "freedom of the Christian man" that Luther so nobly expressed in one of his greatest writings; but Luther caught another truth also. This new spirit of the man, representing God's inner rule, must mold and control all the life of the man. It has been a common error, in thinking of the kingdom of God as spiritual, to suppose that it dealt solely with inner experiences and emotions. This inner spirit, on the contrary, claims the right to dominate all life. There is no sacred here, shut off from a part of life which we may call profane or worldly. It is the life task of a man to see what this ideal means for his every interest and activity, and to

inform these with that spirit. This alone means the full rule of God in his life.

Considering the scope of God's kingdom, we note next that God's rule is not limited to individual life. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as a purely individual life with man. There is, of course, individual consciousness and individual responsibility, but our actual life is always lived in relations. It is not simply that man has duties to his fellows; the social fact is larger than that. A large part of human life, covering man's highest experiences, is not possible to the individual as such at all; it is lived by men together. We have emphasized in evangelical circles the Christian life as an inner experience and as a direct relation to God. That is all needful, but quite as significant is the life which men lead not as individuals but as groups. Work, play, love, and worship (What Men Live By, Dr. Richard C. Cabot calls them in the title of his fine work)—these activities at their best and highest all belong to men in groups. They are expressed in friendship, family, community, church, industry, and all the narrower and larger forms of political life. These are man's real life, not something external to it. Now, the rule of God must extend to these just as truly as to that part of human life which is expressed in a mystical experience or an offered prayer. We easily forget that the Old Testament is almost wholly concerned with the group and the group life, set forth here in the people Israel. And we forget that this group life of Israel, with which law and prophets are concerned, included industry and state as well as worship. Human life is not yet sanctified if men remember God when each prays alone and

forget to inquire his will when they plan and work together.

Two errors must be avoided here. It is wrong to suppose that if all individuals were to become Christians, then our social life would at once be Christian and all our problems be solved. What endless examples we have had of Christian nations that suffered grievous evils, and suffer them still, and of "good men" who have been slow to see what was unbrotherly and unrighteous and unjust in the business which they shared and the social order which they supported. Such men and nations are not forthwith to be called Pharisees and hypocrites. They are Christian, but still in the making. It is not a simple matter to see what the will of God means for all the complex life of our modern day, for health, for education, for industry, for government. And it is harder still in patient toil and experiment, in subjection of self and large-hearted cooperation to embody the will of God in the social institutions of humanity.

The second error, which also we found in premillennial circles, is that "gospel salvation is purely individual." "Regeneration," says Dr. Griffith Thomas, "is never used in the New Testament in connection with society, but always and only in regard to the individual" (Christian Workers Magazine, October, 1916). As a matter of fact, the word occurs but twice in our English Bible, and the one reference in the Gospels (Matt. 19. 28) is clearly not to the individual, but to the world as a whole. But such questions are not settled by verbal references. The simple fact is that human life, if it is to be saved at all, must be saved in its various social relations and

institutions, for it is in these that it lives. The "spirituality" which supposes that a man's "soul" is an entity that can be saved by itself and apart from all this life is alike intellectually shallow and morally false. We need to-day the Christian man who will face the fact that he is a part of this human society, of this industrial order which means oppression or justice, of this state which wages selfish war or stands for righteous peace, of this nation which knows no end but its own profit and glory or which bears with patient strength its share of the burden that there may be a new world order. These sins are our sins, these tasks our tasks. For the sins we must pray the forgiveness of God, for the tasks we must have his help. The new life can come only as he gives that life. And this is social redemption. For all these institutions and relations there is a will of God and a help from God as truly as for my individual life. Each day we are seeing it more clearly: these questions are at bottom all of them moral questions. The principles of Jesus which command our individual conscience to-day must rule these relations to-morrow. The technical task may be difficult in industry or international relations, but the guiding ideals are clear. Reverence for humanity, a passion for justice, a spirit of service, a sense of solidarity, a will to work together—this is the world's way of life, and this is the spirit of Christ. And here, as everywhere else, salvation is at once the gift of God and the task of man.

The Kingdom as a New and Free Humanity

In its highest meaning, then, the kingdom of God on earth is God's moral control of human life not by outer

compulsion but through the freedom of an indwelling spirit. The rule of God, which begins with the law of necessity in the natural world, becomes in this human world just God's gift of himself, with the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling presence of God, as its very heart. On God's side it thus becomes inseparable from redemption, and, indeed, coextensive with it. For redemption is simply displacing the sway of evil with the presence and power of a higher life. Or we may compare this growing rule of God with his work of creation. A traditional theology has made the work of creation end with the existence of a physical universe. It were better to call this its beginning. As a matter of fact, we have learned to see that physical creation is itself a process, not the work of a moment but of long ages in which God has been pouring his life into the world and steadily realizing his purpose. If, now, we look at humanity we must use the same words. You may call it redemption or creation: God has been making a human race. He has been giving himself to it; he has been pouring his life into humanity. Where truth has appeared in man's mind, where love has come into his heart, where righteousness has come to rule his life, there God's creation has appeared. And creation is always the same, a giving of life, God pouring his own life into the world. What Paul says of the individual Christian in calling him a new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17, margin), that we say of the new world of God's kingdom which is coming on earth.

One word more must be added. Always it must be remembered that this new world, which from God's side we have called kingdom, creation, or redemption, is

in every part man's life just as truly as it is God's gift. That must be made clearer later, but needs this reference now. It is through and through moral life. God's control is not external, God's gift is not some external force, some thing that is not ourselves. It is not repression of human life, but man's life at its highest: man's vision of truth, his discernment of duty, his confident trust, his free obedience, his loyalty and love and passion for righteousness. The Spirit of God in man becomes the new man. The new world is the new humanity.

The Transformation of the Outer World

One of the elements in the Old Testament view of the coming day of God's rule is that it will bring a transformed earth. Not only will there be abundance of harvests, but nature herself will be transformed. Waste places will become fertile, desert lands will be transformed by springs and streams of water. The beasts will lose their ferocity and will dwell together in peace, and man will enjoy length of life (Isa. 11. 6–9; 35; 65. 17–25; Ezek. 47. 6–12). Have these elements any place in the Christian hope?

We must say, first of all, that the underlying principle here is wholly sound. It is the same principle that we express to-day in the thought of the unity of life. It is a mistaken spirituality which professes indifference to physical conditions. Unwholesome physical surroundings are a drag upon spiritual development. Wrong conditions of toil are a threat to all higher progress. When a man's work is marked by long hours and a dreary monotony of toil, the tendency will be to find diversion in unwholesome excitement or

vicious excess. It leads naturally to the saloon and brothel for men, to public dance hall and the vicious theater for young people. On the positive side students have recognized what Professor Patten calls the New Basis of Civilization in his volume by that name. Material goods of themselves can never produce the higher life of the spirit, but they supply a necessary condition. All the higher interests of man's life, art and science, religion and education, friendship and wholesome recreation, have an economic basis. There are great enterprises of the church and philanthropy and state which are waiting for material means in order to their execution. The prophetic vision is sound which includes in the coming day harvests and health, a nature more beautiful and more bounteous.

It is another question how this is to come, but upon that problem the past centuries have thrown a good deal of light. The answer is exactly the same as in the spiritual world. God gives his gifts not from without but through man's own activity. To fling gifts into idle hands is to curse and not to bless. If God's world brings any revelation of God, then he does not work that way. One can imagine the curse that would come upon men if the picture of Papias were true, and the new world should show such astounding fertility that men needed only to reach forth the hand in order abundantly to supply their wants. The highest type of human life has not come in the tropics, where men had not need of great toil to build shelter against the cold or provide against the winter, where nature's abundance made easy the problem of food. The new world of nature is not coming by some miraculous transforming force.

Step by step it comes through the activity of man and in three ways: (1) the mind of man by which he masters the laws of nature, and learns to rule her by working with her; (2) the industry of man in patient constant toil, that serves alike for moral training and for production; (3) the cooperation with fellow men, by which alone the greater tasks are wrought, the necessity of which again is a school for man's higher life.

It is hardly necessary to suggest the progress that the race has made in the making of a new earth. Great plagues which once decimated the race have been overcome, and the way of further advance has been made clear with such scourges as typhoid fever and tuberculosis. The last decades have shown a rapid advance in the knowledge of right living. The use of machinery and the application of power have multiplied tenfold man's power of production. We have literally changed deserts to gardens in areas far exceeding that indicated by Ezekiel. Two items, however, need to be clearly noted here:

1. Despite the progress made we are only in the beginnings. It is not the road we have left behind that is so important; it is the fact that we see so clearly the road ahead of us. We know that it will take time and patience and cooperation and juster principles in our economic order and a finer cooperation of men and nations as against the selfish scramble of the past. But we know the road. It will take all the forces of mankind, the men of science and invention and mechanical skill, the men of genius in business organization, the great directors of industry, the students of politics and economics, the statesmen of a new order both of mind and

character, and a spirit of brotherhood and cooperation and service on the part of all; and it will mean a long, long road. But there is no reason why any man should ask work in vain. There is no reason why he should not have leisure for home and friends and church and reading and recreation. There is no reason why each family should not have a real home with sunlight and fresh air and a real chance for privacy, why childhood should not have full opportunity to get ready for life and men and women a fair share of books and beauty and travel and life's other goods. There is no reason why the great diseases that afflict mankind should not be banished, or why the abnormal and defective should be born into the world.

2. This fairer, richer world of environment and opportunity will be conditioned at every step by the moral-spiritual factor. The moral failure is the greatest obstacle to-day to the physical advance. Broadly speaking, that was the root of the whole tragedy of the World War, which in itself is but a phase of a far larger matter. The nineteenth century had made an unparalleled advance in natural science, in mechanical invention, in all that concerned the knowledge of the material world and its technical mastery. But the rate of growth in material wealth and power had far outdistanced the advance in moral resources and spiritual insight. Economic life had made swift increase in wealth and power and complexity, but we had not enough of either moral vision or strength to humanize this new industry and to make the new wealth a minister of justice instead of a servant of self-indulgence. Nations had grown great in territory and trade, but not great enough in spirit to

rule themselves and practice justice and brotherhood. And what was worse, men mistook the advance in wealth and natural science and technical skill for an advance in civilization.

It is a whole world that will be redeemed in the day of the kingdom of God, and to that end the service of all men and the utilization of all forces will be necessary. The man who works with his hands in actual production, the man who organizes and directs, the scientist and the inventor, the statesman and the student of social and economic problems—these are all needed. But the greatest service in the end is that of those who give vision and inspiration, who produce moral forces and train character. But when we have clearly recognized that the physical must be under the dominance of the spiritual, then we are ready to appreciate Browning's picture of the harmonious whole and to apply it beyond the individual to the new order of that day.

"Let us not always say,
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul.'"

CHAPTER XI

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God, as we have seen, is the sway of the Spirit of God in the life of men. It reaches all the life of this world of ours, it is a rule over every force and every activity; but it is a control from within shaping all human life according to the spirit of love and righteousness which we know in Jesus Christ to be the Spirit of God. How, then, is this kingdom to come upon earth?

The Nature Determines the Method

Clearly, the nature of the kingdom determines the manner of its coming. And first, mere external force can have only a preparatory and incidental place. Such a provisional place force has, as we have seen. The realm of nature with its laws that operate by necessity is an important part of God's method with man. Here by stern tuition with much of toil and pain, man learns to observe, to reflect, to toil regularly, to look to the future, to control himself, to work with others. And just as man has found it necessary in human society, so with God there is a place for restraint and punishment, and even destruction. But the limitation of this method exists for God just as truly as for man, and that in the very nature of the case. The physical can produce only physical. The forest settler can clear the field with his ax, but the yellow harvest can come only from the life that is in the seed. Sheer strength will serve to pile

log on log and rear the settler's hut, but a home he can build only with the forces of love and patience and sympathy and loyalty. Like produces like. Two sounds may join to give a harmony, but they will never make a loaf of bread. A father may join the strength of a full-grown man with the wealth of a millionaire, his riches may command the services of others and material goods without limit, but all these together will not make character in a son. Mere force by itself never has produced moral results. The kingdom of God is moral and spiritual, and only moral and spiritual forces can produce it.

It is interesting to take this lesson from human experience. In the training of the child, in the treatment of the prisoner, in the government of peoples, in the relation of nations, everywhere we have been learning the same truth. Force may be a temporary necessity with those whose conscience and reason do not, or cannot, respond, but it cannot settle a single problem of itself. It can destroy; it can never build up. Our principle must always be: use force as little as possible, have recourse to moral and spiritual forces as soon as possible, and from these alone expect results. You may need to restrain the prisoner, but your real task is as a man to reach the man in him and to train that man to take his place in the world. Warden Osborne did that in New York; Warden Tynan, of Colorado, and others have done it. War may be necessary, but the lesson shouted in our ears by the past, and not least by the events since November 11, 1918, is that war can at most clear the ground for the rebuilding, that mutual understanding, the rare spirit of national self-criticism and self-control,

the spirit of justice rising above pride and self-interest, and the willingness to serve others and work with others, alone can build a new world.

God's Method One of Revelation

What, then, are those elements, moral and spiritual, in the method of God with men by which he is establishing his rule on earth?

God's first instrument is truth. God does not seek to rule by compelling force or by command blindly obeyed. He has made man to know and his appeal is to this man whom he has made. "Come now and let us reason together," is Jehovah's word through the prophet. The glory of Hebrew prophecy lies here. It leaves ritual and law to priest and scribe. For itself it has seen the truth, the Lord high and lifted up, and now it turns not to quote the command of a letter, but to appeal to the mind and conscience of man in the light of its vision. And what is the method of Jesus but this appeal? He called no fire down from heaven nor summoned twelve legions of angels. He chose deliberately to be a teacher, and that he remained by word and life to the very hour of the cross. What were his parables but arguments? That was his appeal again and again, "What think ye?" We are only putting this in another way when we say in Christian terms, God's way with man is that of revelation. Revelation, let us recall, is simply God showing himself, but the God whom we see is nothing less for us than all the truth of life. Here is not only the Power that we trust and serve, but the Spirit that we are to be, the Ideal that commands. We see that most clearly in Jesus as the revelation of God, the Son who shows us at

once what the Father is and what the children should be (Matt. 5. 43–48; 11. 25–30).

The Method of Self-Giving

The method of God is that of self-giving. Redemption and revelation go hand in hand, and both are through the living presence of God. We do not worship some remote Being who hands down a message from the distant heavens, or reaches down now and then to work some miracle. He is an indwelling God. The world has its life in him. The prophets saw him as one who moved in the life of the nations, who had brought up Israel out of Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir, who had anointed a Cyrus for his task (Amos 9. 7; Isa. 45. 1). The psalmist and the pagan poet whom Paul quoted alike realized this fact (Psa. 139; Acts 17. 28). Into this life of the world this God seeks to pour himself, giving his truth, his righteousness, his own self in fellowship with his children. The picture of Revelation is the picture of all history: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He is the God of light who illuminates man's soul and fights against darkness; he is the God of love who brings the touch of mercy; he is the God of righteousness who fights against all iniquity and oppression; he is the God of toil, comrade and fellow worker with all who strive and serve. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. 63. 9). The cross of Christ is not a passing incident but a revelation of the divine life from eternity. Here is the vital meaning of the doctrine of the Holy

Spirit, too little appreciated by the church. The transcendent God is also the indwelling God, he is the transforming Spirit of the holy God who dwells in men. He is in them the power of a new life, and all their love and faith and service is his life in them.

The Way of Freedom

The method of God with man is that of freedom. There is one rule over servants; there is another over sons. The servant yields so much of time and toil; the son gives love and trust and all of life in inner loyalty. But the deed of a son is a free deed. Here is the transformation of religion, seen from afar by a Jeremiah (31. 33), set forth in word and life by Jesus, championed in his own way by Paul in his fight against legalism and his great teaching of the freedom of faith. The freedom of the Christian man is the freedom of faith, an obedience that springs from inner conviction; and that is but the human side that corresponds to God's method of appeal through the truth. And the freedom of the Christian man is the freedom of an inner life, whose obedience is the compulsion of his own spirit of love and loyalty; and this corresponds to the doctrine of the indwelling Spirit. That doctrine we must look at a moment again, for there is a misleading dualism which is always setting divine and human over against each other in mutual exclusion. This is the great truth about the Christian doctrine of the Spirit, that for the man who receives God the Spirit in him ceases to be an Other and becomes his own self. Paul struggles with the paradox: "I live . . . I no longer live . . . Christ liveth . . . I live" (Gal. 2. 19, 20). The Spirit of God does not sweep away

consciousness, thought, will; it is not the repression of the human but its realization. As never before a man can say, "I live." He knows that this new life is God's gift, but he knows equally that it is his own life. And so it is the life of freedom, the only free life; it is the expression of what is within, not the submission to something without.

The Method of Growth

The method of growth or development follows necessarily from what has preceded. God reaches man through the truth; no other way is possible with a moral being. But truth is always gradually apprehended. What we can perceive depends upon what we already have. The Bible as a whole shows this growth in clearest fashion. The most confirmed literalist will not take his ethics from Joshua or Judges. The method of God is that of education. To contrast education and regeneration is to put asunder what God has joined together. Education is the development of life through the truth. The truth is not the life but it is the door of entrance for it. Education is life-giving, not simply imparting facts and developing skill; but it gives the life through the truth. If the Spirit of God is to work in man ethically (as Holy Spirit) and not as bare force, then it must work this way (John 14. 17, 26; 16. 13, 14). And truth and grace thus come together, and both by growth (2 Pet. 3. 18). Similarly, God's method in bringing the kingdom is one of growth because the kingdom is a matter of life.

The Way of Conflict and Crisis

The method of conflict and crisis has been too often overlooked by those who have emphasized the method

of growth. There is a shallow optimism which talks as though the nature of all things were essentially good and some inner and necessary power were moving us all on to better days. That this is false any man may know who looks into his own heart or out upon the world. Goodness is not a drift; it is a choice and a struggle. The doctrine of the kingdom must deal with the fact of evil. There is a realm of evil that stands opposed to the kingdom of the good and of God. It is not necessary to share the elaborate demonologies of Jewish apocalyptics, but we must do justice to this fact. Three elements may be distinguished here:

1. There is the evil tendency of human nature which any man knows who seeks to serve the good. What constant struggle it takes to overcome the lure of the sensual, the tug of selfish desire, the swift onset of passion, or the dead weight of indifference and inertia!

2. There is the rule of false ideas and false ideals in the world, exercising their sway in wildest extent over individual and group. We note the delusion that the possession of things is the key of life. We think of the false goals that have lured whole nations to the ways of destruction. Looking out to-day, we see that the fall of Germany has not taught the peoples their lesson. There is the same dependence upon force, the same grasping after national advantage. Shantung and Fiume and the Saar Valley and Persia all have a word to say here, nor is the systematic effort to embroil the United States with Mexico without its meaning.

3. There is an intrenchment of evil in institutions and associations. Such embodiments of evil were once found in individuals; in Daniel it is Antiochus Epiphanes, in

Revelation it is Nero. To-day no individual could play such a role. In Russia a corrupt bureaucracy was stronger than the Czar. The fateful force in Germany was not Kaiser Wilhelm; it was a combination of the Junkers, the militaristic group, and the jingoistic party of expansion. Economic exploitation, organized in many different forms, is perhaps the greatest single force obstructing the way of justice and freedom.

The opposition of evil means not only conflict but crisis, and sometimes revolution. The dammed-up waters of a swollen stream simply increase their power of pressure with resistance until they sweep everything before them. We are in the midst of such an epochal change; the World War was but an aspect of it, and the end is not yet in sight. The autocracy of economic privilege is doomed as truly as the autocracy of government, and it may be that the day has come for the passing of that long period in which strong peoples have exploited the weak, parceling the kingdoms of earth among themselves. Whether the new day will come through gradual change or with terrific and destructive revolution is not yet clear. History has known many such a crisis of deepest importance to the progress of the kingdom of God. Social organization is necessary for human life in every part, religious as well as political and economic. But history repeats the same story over and over again of institutions that cease to be instruments and become obstacles to humanity and to God. Deterioration, stagnation, petrifaction, appropriation by the few for selfish ends—these all occur to the institutions of society or to its organized social life, and revolution may have to solve the problem which does not yield to vital change.

History has illustrations in abundance: Jerusalem and its temple, Roman empire, mediæval church, the old French empire before the Revolution, and outstanding instances of recent years whose tale may not yet be full. And quite aside from all this there are great crises when a day marks a change in the tide or brings forth forces whose work long generations will not exhaust.

Certain facts, however, must yet be noted. Revolution and crisis are always an organic part of history, related to what precedes and follows. God does not work from outside. The greatest event of human history, the coming of Jesus into the world, best illustrates this. Further, revolution itself may sweep aside obstruction, it cannot build up. And, finally, every day of great change, like this day, is a tremendous summons to faith and service. To-day old institutions are crumbling, life is in a flux, in places the stagnation of generations has yielded to mobility that responds to a touch. But all this of itself does not mean a new day. We look at international life and see governments that seem to be settling back into the old ways of selfish alliance, diplomatic intrigue, and the scramble for concessions and spheres of influence, while in the economic world the cries are being raised on both sides that range group against group with little sense of the larger life and larger justice for the whole. Revolution is an opportunity, not a solution.

A Social Method

We are all agreed that the goal of God is social both for this world and the next. Whether we talk of the kingdom of God, of a new world, a new humanity, or a redeemed race, we are using social figures just as he does

who speaks of a coming brotherhood. But the social goal can come only through social means. The social goal is a way of living together that involves love and truth and justice and patience and good will and cooperation. These are not abstract ideals. They can be learned only by practice, and only through long practice can they be built up in the relations of life and the institutions which embody them. Justice means justice learned and illustrated in industry. Love means a definite spirit and practice bodied forth in home and community. It is one of the childish superficialities of premillennialism that it overleaps such facts and steps at once from individual regeneration to a perfect social order. ("The true league of nations, and the divine federation of the world, are yet to come, founded on the individual regeneration of all mankind and the personal administration of Messiah."—Our Hope, Vol. XXVI, p. 227.)

Christian thought needs urgently to-day an appreciation of these varied social relations not simply as so many seats of evil and sources of problems, but as great possible instruments of God and elements in the coming kingdom. We are just beginning to see how a juster economic order may become a powerful agency for the uplift of the whole range of human life. Such an order does not mean merely the multiplication of material goods and the elimination of the twin curse of poverty and excess wealth; it involves mutual understanding and sympathy, the practice of everyday brotherhood in the form of cooperation, a vision of a larger good that transcends individual interest, and other elements of high moral significance. We are beginning also to see the higher

meaning of the state as primitive Christians could not see it in a time when the state was pagan in aim and in control. And especially is this evident in those ideals of a new international order with which the minds of many have been engaged. We send our ships of grain to aid starving peoples in foreign lands, at best a slight palliation of terrible distress. The remedy must enter into the life of the state and fundamental to that remedy will be the principles of national and international justice and brotherhood which are an expression of the rule of God.

A special word needs to be spoken about the church. By the church is here meant the visible body of Christ, his people joined in fellowship for worship and service. It is this visible church which premillennialists repudiate as an instrument for building up the kingdom of God upon earth, and of which they predicate present and increasing corruption to end in total failure. Their position is not helped by the declaration that they believe in a church composed of the true followers of Jesus scattered throughout the world. From Paul onward it is this association of Christ's followers joined in visible fellowship and working and worshiping together that has been known as the church. The question of terms, however, does not matter so much. The point is that if the gospel is to be preached, and men united in worship, and children nurtured in the Christian life, and works of Christian ministry to be wrought, it can only be done by Christian men thus visibly associated. Premillennial movements like the Plymouth Brethren begin by denouncing all church organizations and then form a sect of their own stricter than all the rest and with

worse faults of division and exclusion. We need a new appreciation of the meaning of the church, the "beloved community." Like all things that live and grow it is not perfect, but it has the life in it. It is not the kingdom of God, as men have supposed, and yet it is the center of that kingdom so far as this is realized upon earth. And in God's purpose it is the chief instrument for realizing that kingdom upon earth. For here is wielded the great weapon by which alone a spiritual kingdom can be brought in, the gospel in which there come to men the God in whom they are to trust, the will of that God for all their life, and the promise of help through the Spirit of that God. What it means in its work of missions, of religious nurture, of community service, of Christian fellowship, of inspiring worship, that can only be mentioned thus by name in passing.

The Transcendence of God

The transcendence of God demands from us a last word here. It is, indeed, our first word as well as our last when we voice the Christian faith in the coming of God's kingdom. The hope of Christian men in the coming of the new world of God's rule is not in human effort as such but in the power and mercy of God. That faith must be clearly stated to avoid error. By the transcendence of God we do not mean that separation of God from the world which we have repudiated, nor the idea that God works from without or apart from men. The immanence of God must be held with his transcendence; our God is an indwelling God. But just as clearly must we recognize that this God who works through men and in men is more than the sum of all human effort and

power. We must work out our own salvation; no finished world will be handed down to us from the skies. But whether we fight the fight against sin in our own heart, or join in some one of the great battles for the new social order, we fight with confidence because of this God. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you" (Phil. 2. 12, 13). And because of this God we have no fear as to the issue. To-day's fight may go against us, but beyond our day and our strength there lie the years of God and his power. Righteousness and love are going to triumph in this world, not because of the strength which they now have, but because in God's being they live perfect and invincible.

CHAPTER XII

CLOSING CONSIDERATIONS

The Absolutistic Conception of God

The study of premillennialism has shown us not a difference in relation to one doctrine but a difference of point of view that was fundamental. And this fundamental difference centers in the question of God and his relation to the world. The conception of God which we have been opposing may be called the absolutistic. God is for it first of all power. Its favorite figure for God is that of King. It deals in absolute contrasts, a present age that is wholly evil, a future age that will be wholly good. A static conception of the world corresponds to this. One stage may succeed another, but each is fixed and definite. There is no idea of growth or gradual attainment. God gives a book, these Sacred Scriptures; because they are the deed of God they must be perfect. Hence verbal inerrancy, the elimination of the genuinely human, as well as of imperfection and growth.

This absolutistic conception of God leads inevitably to the institutional conception of religion. Religion too must be something definite and fixed and perfect or it could not have come from God; for this absolute Being must be able to produce at once and perfectly what his will determines. Now, religion as a life and an experience is always something growing, and therefore imperfect. Hence the real essence of this religion must

be sought elsewhere and in something that is fixed and complete. Sometimes that is found in the creeds or in some system of doctrine, sometimes in the Bible conceived as verbally inspired and infallible, sometimes in the church as the embodiment of the kingdom and the representative of God (in its priesthood) with full power. But whichever it is, doctrine or letter of Scripture or church, it appears as a final and absolute authority to which man has merely to bow in submission.

It is easy to see what God's relation to the world becomes. It is primarily that of the autocratic ruler, standing without his world and above it, and determining its course by sheer power and according to his arbitrary will. This autocratic conception of God has very largely dominated theology. That was natural because theology originated in a time when the king stood highest and the only king men knew was the Oriental despot. Apocalypticism represents that idea in its extreme, but the one-sided emphasis on the sovereignty of God wherever found, with its apparatus of divine decrees and foreordained history and predestinated fate for men, represents the same position. Such a conception of God is not true to human experience. Such a God no longer represents the highest in human ideal. And such a doctrine is not true to the vision of God's character that we have in the spirit of Jesus Christ. With this goes naturally a misconception of the nature of God's authority. God is not the indwelling Spirit who controls because he convinces, to whom man yields obedience because man bows before him as the good. He is the King who gives commands, whom subjects must obey whether there be understanding and conviction or no.

It is simply the autocracy with which we are familiar in the world of state transferred to the realm of religion.

The Indwelling, Self-Giving God

It is quite a different conception of God which has been set forth for acceptance in this discussion. We have been following the conception of Jesus, who chose the word "Father" for his name of God. Goodness and love—these are what Jesus holds forth that men may trust and obey. God becomes that personal Being who in perfect goodness directs this world and gives himself for the life of men. Outstanding in this thought is the idea, first, that God is a personal Being with whom man enters into personal fellowship rather than the sheer Power before which man must bow; second, that God is goodness, making and redeeming this world by his own indwelling life and not by mere force exercised from without.

This does not exclude the idea of the transcendence of God in being and power. It rules out pantheism because we believe in a personal God and in one who is more than all those forces which we know as working in this world, whether the forces of nature or those of goodness and righteousness and truth. What it does mean is that this God who is Creator and Lord of all chooses to come to men as Person and not merely as Power, that he is seeking a rule by moral influence and not by physical force, that he is shaping his new world not by external force but as indwelling and self-imparting Spirit.

It is clear that such a conception gives at once a nobler thought of God and a richer and diviner meaning to human life and history. The cross of Christ ceases

to be an isolated event and becomes a revelation of that which is eternal in the heart of God. The life of God is in self-giving and sacrifice. The road of service is the only way of saving, whether for God or man. God is always Immanuel, "God with us." He does not stand off and look at a world to which he has given a book of doctrine and command. Our God is King, but he is a King who serves—yes, and a King who gives. If we could but read its deeper meaning, we should see human history as the story of God ceaselessly pouring his life into our human life and seeking to give himself to men. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." What men call evolution is God's shaping power working in nature to make his universe. What men call beauty is the garment through which there shines the soul that is God. And most of all where men's souls reach up in aspiration, where their life shows any vision of truth, any spirit of service, any gleam of love or devotion, there we see the moving presence of the divine. That is the meaning of the lines of William Herbert Carruth:[1]

"A fire mist and a planet—
A crystal and a cell—
A jellyfish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

"A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high—

[1] From Each in His Own Tongue and Other Poems, by William H. Carruth. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the goldenrod—
Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

"Like the tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in—
Come from the mystic ocean,
Whose rim no foot has trod—
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God.

"A picket frozen on duty—
A mother starved for her brood—
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway plod—
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God."

The Relation of God and Man

And thus we come to a truer conception of religion. The essence of religion is a personal relation with God. Religion is a life, and life shapes for itself forms: creed and ritual and church and sacred writings But all these are simply the product of the life and the instrument to express and to serve it, not the life itself. The life itself is this personal fellowship with God. There is only one door for it: a God who shows himself as righteousness and love, and an answering human life that gives itself in obedient trust. But the issue is something that transcends any human relation, for this God by his Spirit becomes the life of man, and the new life of faith and love and righteousness and service is at once this man's life and the life of the God that dwells in him.

The highest religion is such a life, mediated by truth, conditioned by faith, having its being in a new moral spirit, having its expression in service.

Such a conception overcomes that false dualism with which men so commonly regard the relation of God and man. Again and again in relation to various matters, to religious education and the work of the kingdom and the course of history, men assume that where man is present God is absent, that when God works man stands passively to one side. There is a unity here that we must grasp; God works in man and through man. And not through man passive, emptied, but in man at his highest and best, with thought most vivid and mind most keen and will alert. "I'm afraid we're showing God how to do this business," said a prominent English evangelist and premillennialist recently. "It's quite unnecessary to tell God what he ought to do. When I see these conferences, committees, and conventions I am amused. They're trying to make God's program." Here is this same old dualism, the same idea of a God who dominates from without instead of working from within, as if the earnest, prayerful thought of Christian leaders gathered together to plan the work of the church for the service of man were not just the agency that God desired through which to work his will on earth. For that is what God wants, not man offering a passive submission, but man seeing the will of God with open mind, girding himself in loyal and understanding purpose as one who is no longer servant but friend, who cries out:

"I delight to do thy will, O my God;
Yea, thy law is within my heart."

The bearing of all this upon our thought of the kingdom of God is evident. The kingdom of God is not an institution to be established at some time by a deed of conquest. It is not the deed of an hour wrought by irresistible force. The kingdom of God is the sway of the Spirit of God in the life of man, it is the life of God that is more and more to fill this human world of ours. It is ethical and therefore it is man's life; at the same time it is God's gift and God's own presence. Because it is life it comes by growth, though not without its times of decline, of crisis, of forward leap. It is spiritual and inner because its essence lies not in things or in external force but in truth and love and righteousness. But it is a spirit that will have no rival and that moves toward universal dominion. It is here because love and truth and righteousness are here, because God is here in human life. It is still to come because there is darkness and error in the world, because human hearts are ruled by another spirit than that of God, and because large reaches of human life in industry and state are not ruled by the spirit of Christ.

The Task of the Church in the Kingdom

This conception of God and the world makes clear the function of religion and the task of the church in relation to the kingdom of God. Broadly speaking, three tasks may be discriminated. First, God must be made real to men and man brought into living fellowship with God. That is our first need and the first task of those who themselves have found God. The kingdom of God is life, a new life, and life is always a gift. This gift comes from God alone. To-day above all days men need to

see God. Old authorities are failing in religion as in state, the authority of the letter, of mere tradition, of vested right in priest or king, all merely external authority is doomed. But authority itself was never more needed. A new authority must take the place of the old, the authority of truth and right. That is the authority of God, for unless truth and righteousness have being in him they are merely the conventions or conveniences of men, and unless God means truth and righteousness he himself will not longer rule. And men need God for faith to face the future. Above all, men must have God because they need not only an authority above them but a life and a strength within. So the church must bring to men this living God, and must win men for the great faith and the great surrender. And that it must do not once at some time of conversion but day by day and week by week, making the invisible world with its beauty and power and life real and near for men. Other agencies will help in other tasks, this the church must do and all else that it does will not acquit it of failure if it fails here.

Second, the church must make plain what the life of this God means in the life of men. Here is the other side of its prophetic task, for this is an ethical God; his presence means a way of thought and of life, and there is not a part of life to which he is indifferent. It is this note of moral authority that the church must regain. There are clamant voices that would outcry the church. They have praise for religion when it will support their claims, otherwise they are quite willing as of old to slay the prophets though with weapons less crude than were once employed. Here is business that bids the preacher

stick to his text and limit himself to an other-worldly and harmless faith. And yet the most urgent need in our industrial life is just that voice of the prophet to declare that men stand above merchandise and that the first rule for business is righteousness and not profit. And here are those who speak in the name of the state, who place above religion as above all else a patriotism which puts conscience second and calls out, "My country, right or wrong." The prophets of old rebuked iniquity though it sat upon the throne. Is the church to lose that high calling because power belongs now to president or prime minister, to congress or parliament, or even because it speaks with the voice of the political majority? But that means for the church interpretation and not merely declaration. It is not enough to speak the name of God; the church must show what the spirit of Christ as the revelation of God demands in all the varied life of our day.

And, finally, the church must continue in its task of service. That theme hardly needs elaboration, but the summons is vital. God has chosen that his kingdom should come through the service of men. And how great that service is we are just beginning to see. The time of easy optimism is gone. It will take all the resources of Christian devotion joined in such cooperation as has not yet been achieved to meet the need.

The Consummation

There are some to whom this conception of a growing kingdom of God is unsatisfactory because it seems so vague. Premillennialism is so much more definite and assured. It sets a period. It declares that at a definite

time there will be a final and full consummation and then an absolute reign of righteousness and peace. We have seen the defects of this promise. Its appeal to an external and irresistible force is really a confession of bankruptcy; it is giving up the hope of a spiritual-moral triumph, for physical means can only establish physical results. Its limitations come from its source in the old Jewish conception: destroy the enemy and put the saints in power.

It is a clear gain that we have made, that we see what the rule of God in the world involves. When we have won men to an acceptance of Christ, the process is just begun. Who can look within his own life and not realize the greatness of the enterprise as man pursues the flying goal whose achievement is nothing less than the character that was in Jesus Christ? What, then, does it mean to make a Christian race, to mold all the complex life of our human kind in work and play and commerce and state and international relation until it becomes the instrument of the service of man and the expression of the spirit of Christ!

But we should not regard this as an endless task before which to stand disheartened. Rather it is the high calling of the race to which for centuries to come men may give their best thought and prayer and love and devotion. This is the real temple of God to which we are to look forward, this structure in which all the races shall yet be united in brotherhood, in which all classes shall cooperate in unity, in which each shall offer his gifts for all and in turn receive from the common wealth such riches as only the life of the whole can bring.

But what of progress? Are we going ahead at all?

Not so rapidly certainly as some men thought a few years ago, especially those who did not see that a swift increase in material possession and technical skill might simply cover an inner poverty. And yet the advance is clear. Follow it through the centuries. Watch the change that has taken place in government, the whole progress of democracy. Consider the difference in the status of woman and childhood. Note the disappearance of slavery and serfdom and the changed conditions of the workingman. And if we move thus by centuries, the same advance is evident in the forces of organized religion.

But what shall we say as we turn to our own disordered time, to the "collapse of civilization" in the World War and the turmoil that fills the industrial world to-day? Well, the World War was not a collapse of civilization; it was the collapse of a system of international relations that had too long controlled the leaders of the nations—the pagan system of national selfishness, relying upon brute force with the aid of that intrigue which men called diplomacy. The first great step in any advance is a vision and an awakening. To many men of vision the outcome of the great war has been a bitter disappointment. We set forth noble ideals. With those that fought and those that toiled at home there was splendid devotion. Among the allied powers of the west there was a cooperation for a common end such as was never seen before. And then Versailles followed, and the same old selfish strife for national advantage with a treatment of the foe that showed little concern for the better world that was to be. But one gain has been made. The whole world has heard the ideals of a new order expressed

by far-seeing leaders like President Wilson and General Smuts. It has seen them received with enthusiasm by the multitudes, and reasserted by great organizations like the British Labor Party even when the leaders of their own government had in practice renounced them. Self-determination for peoples, an end to the mperialistic seizure and barter of lands and peoples, an end to secret diplomacy and selfish alliances and balances of power which are nothing but war in suspense, the cooperation of nations to displace the old isolation and selfishness, security and justice for the least of peoples as for the greatest—these were some of the ideals.

Turn to the world of industry, and back of its unrest you will find as one cause the liberation of other and similar ideals. Manhood is above material things, the supreme concern of government is not privilege but people, democracy belongs in industry and not merely in politics, the possession of the ballot cannot compensate for the failure of equal opportunity, the motive of service must displace the motive of gain and the method of cooperation must take the place of that of strife—these ideals too have found expression in these last years as never before. The leaders of the Western peoples raised the war cry of democracy in order to summon people to the standards in a great conflict. But it is easier to start men to thinking than to stop them; and men have been searching the broad meanings of democracy and carrying its ideals to other fields.

The ideals, it is quite true, seem many of them farther from realization than ever before. In international life the old men who are in power are following largely the old ways. In society a wave of reactionism marks one

extreme and an appeal to violence the other. But why be surprised at all this? Ideals were never achieved in a day, and it will take long generations to work these out. But the ideals have been set forth, and that is the first great step. In them is "the promise and potency" of the life that is to be. It is the spirit of Jesus in application to life's great questions that is working in these ideals. And they will never die. Institutions change slowly but the ferment of these truths will remain in the minds of the masses of men. They will not lose them even if some who enunciate them prove untrue. That is the great advance that has been made in these years toward a world that shall be more just, more kind, more brotherly; we have seen something of the real issue and of the ideals that must prevail. And not the least signal evidence on this point is the series of declarations on economic as on international questions that have come from the great Christian bodies of England and America, declarations as remarkable for their vision and courage as for their agreement.

But who can tell how much more swiftly the progress may come in the years ahead? There is one instrument of change to whose importance society, and especially the church, is just beginning to awaken. That is education. We know now that the world of to-morrow must first live in the minds of the children of to-day. Are we convinced that if we can put the ideal into the children of to-day, the world of to-morrow *will* be different? It surely is not necessary to say that "education" as here used does not mean communicating facts or imparting technical skill. It does mean the molding of mind and heart through ideals that are given oppor-

tunity for expression. Each generation God pours into the world a tide of new life, not hardened by habit nor held by ancient forms of thought and life but responsive to the touch, ready to be formed. There is no summons to the church like this summons, to lead the world into a new life by the door of youth. It is this thought that underlies Benjamin Kidd's last volume on the Science of Power. "So far from civilization being practically unchangeable or only changeable through influences operating slowly over long periods of time, the world can be changed in a brief space of time. Within the life of a single generation it can be made to undergo changes so profound, so revolutionary, so permanent, that it would almost appear as if human nature itself had been completely altered." The instrument of power is the passion for the ideal and the place of its implanting in the mind of youth. That is the meaning of his closing words: "O, you blind leaders who seek to convert the world by laboring disputations! Step out of the way or the world must fling you aside. Give us the Young. Give us the Young and we will create a new mind and a new earth in a single generation."[1]

Two words need yet to be added, and the first is this: The final consummation for Christian hope is not this world but the next. At its best this world will only be approximating the goal. The new generations as they come must in their turn choose and strive and decide, and it will always remain a growing world. Nor can it ever be the home of those who have passed away. It will always remain the world of time and change and death.

[1] From The Science of Power, by Benjamin Kidd. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers, New York and London.

The final home of the sons of men will be another than this world where the passing generation spends its brief days and takes its training for the life beyond.

And the final word, here as always when we think of the Christian hope, is that of faith. There is no program of future events that any one can demonstrate. Like the first generation of the church, we for our day have only to trust in God and await the event with the assurance that to such faith the Spirit of God will give light and strength. We may well make our own the closing words of the Statement of Faith adopted a few years ago by the representatives of the Evangelical Free Churches of England.

"These things as all else in our Christian faith we hold in reverent submission to the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit Who is Truth, and we shall ever seek of Him enlightenment and grace both to unlearn our errors and also more fully to learn the mind and will of God Whom to know is life eternal and to serve is perfect freedom.

"And being thus called of God unto the purpose of his redeeming love wherein He is delivering the world from sin and misery and is reconciling all things to himself in Christ Jesus, and being animated with faith in the final triumph of our Lord, we set before us as our end and aim to carry the Gospel to every creature, and to serve and establish in our land and throughout the earth His reign of righteousness, joy, and peace."

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

I. WAS JOHN WESLEY A PREMILLENNIALIST?

Of the larger church bodies in this country, hardly another has given so little place to premillennialism as the Methodist Church. In the published report of the last "prophetic conference" held in Chicago, that of 1914, a list of premillennialists was appended. The list shows an apparent effort to make it as extensive as possible, for nearly half of the names are of those not living, and the living are by no means limited to those who are well known or representative. Yet with all this, among the two hundred and sixty-nine living there are but eight Methodist Episcopal ministers, and the list does not contain a single Methodist bishop, general officer, or district superintendent, or a teacher from any Methodist college or seminary. To break the force of this situation the effort has been made to prove that Wesley himself was a premillennialist. This has been most recently attempted in an editorial in the Christian Workers Magazine of October, 1916.

Turning to Wesley's sermons, the first notable fact is that Wesley nowhere discusses a single one of the distinctive ideals of premillennialism. This has reference to the two volumes of sermons which Wesley himself collected and to which he prefaced the statement: "I am not conscious that there is any one point of doctrine on which I am accustomed to speak in public, which is not here laid before every Christian reader." Now Wesley, as a matter of fact, was deeply interested in the

very subject with which premillennialism is concerned, the bringing in of the kingdom of God upon earth. In discussing this and similar subjects, however, his position at every point is opposed to that of chiliasm. This can be readily determined by the reading of such sermons as "The Way to the Kingdom," "The Great Assize, "The Spread of the Gospel," "The Signs of the Times," and "On Former Times." Premillennialism declares that the world is hopeless and is steadily getting worse. Wesley says: "No 'former time' since the apostle left the earth has been better than the present. . . . We are not born out of due time but in the day of his power, a day of glorious salvation, wherein he is hastening to renew the whole race of mankind in righteousness and true holiness" (Sermons, Vol. II, p. 363). In "The General Spread of the Gospel" he is emphatic on this point of the steady advance of God's work. The idea that God's purpose in this age was limited to the saving of an elect number would have brought forth the sharpest rejoinder from the man whose preaching involved the constant insistence that God's plan was for the salvation of all men. Over against the appeal to a miraculous intervention as the only hope of the world one can quote Wesley's persistent note of confidence in that gospel which he himself carried with glad assurance to the most wretched and wicked elements of the England of his day. And against the appeal to force we have the Wesleyan doctrine of the Spirit, the gift that God waits to give every man who will have it and the power that can redeem man from every sin. Against the despair of Christianizing the world's life, one needs to remember his own courageous application of Christian principles

to every social condition and his attack upon such evils as slavery, intemperance, and poverty. Wesley's plan was to save the ship and not simply to take off a few souls from a doomed vessel, as premillennialism suggests.

A recent writer, Rev. J. F. Silver, quotes a striking sentence from Mr. Wesley's sermon on "The Spread of the Gospel" to show him a premillennialist. In this sermon Wesley raises the question which premillennialism seeks to answer. He surveys the world, and notes the presence of evil and the slight progress of true religion. He quotes his text, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," and then asks, How can these things be? Then follows the statement quoted by Silver: "On one supposition, indeed, not only all impossibility, but all difficulty vanishes away. Only suppose the Almighty to act irresistibly, and the thing is done." (Sermons, Vol. II, p. 76.) This sentence is certainly a plain statement of the premillennial position which despairs of other agencies and appeals to the sheer force of omnipotence. It is presumably accepted as such not only by Mr. Silver but by such leaders as Dr. J. M. Gray and Dr. R. A. Torrey, who approve this book, and Professor Griffith Thomas, who especially calls the attention of Methodists to this volume written by a Methodist minister and with an introduction by a Methodist bishop, Dr. Hogue. (The author and the bishop are members of the Free Methodist Church.) All this is interesting because the sentence quoted represents the exact opposite of Mr. Wesley's opinion. He states it only to refute it, and he does it so plainly and emphatically that one is left no recourse but to acquit Mr. Silver of having read any of the sermon except this one sentence. Even

then a little knowledge of Wesley's theology should have saved the writer and his sponsors from such an error. Were God to act irresistibly, Mr. Wesley goes on to say, then "man would be man no longer. . . . He would no longer be a moral agent; . . . consequently he would no longer be capable of virtue or vice, of reward or punishment." Then Wesley sets forth his own position. The world is to be saved just as you were saved. Was that by force? Was it not, rather, by God's grace assisting you to choose the better part? Just so, "the kingdom of God will not come with observation; but will silently increase, wherever it is set up, and spread from heart to heart, from house to house, from town to town, from kingdom to kingdom." And this will not end till universal holiness and happiness are established in the earth (Sermons, Vol. II, pp. 76–82; see also Vol. II, pp. 98, 103, and Vol. I, p. 64. References are to First American Edition in Seven Volumes).

Reference has been made to an editorial in the Christian Workers Magazine which undertakes to prove that Wesley was a premillennialist. Most of the evidence there offered is supposed to be taken from Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, which, as is well known, were an avowed reproduction of Bengel's Gnomon. Most of the proofs are rather vague, and even so are not borne out by reference to the Notes themselves. After extensive reading of the literature and exegesis of modern premillennial literature, the writer may say that none of the special passages exploited by premillennialists in the interest of their doctrine are interpreted by Wesley in the current premillennial manner. It is argued that Wesley "taught specifically the preaching of the gospel

as a testimony to all nations." Certainly, but not in the Adventist sense. On the contrary, he refers this to Paul's preaching, and the words "then shall the end come," he finds fulfilled in Jerusalem's destruction (Notes, Matt. 24. 14). Wesley, it is said, taught that it was "the duty of the church to observe the signs of the times." But Wesley's sermon "The Signs of the Times" points directly away from premillennialism. He interprets the phrase spiritually and rebukes those who cannot see the signs of the times which indicate that the whole spread of Christianity is like the silently working leaven and the growing mustard seed (Sermons, Vol. II, pp. 96, 97; see also on Matt. 16. 3). Wesley sees the establishment of Christ's kingdom and the coming of Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem and the increase of the church (Notes on Matt. 10. 23; 16. 28; 24. 34). He writes of one general resurrection of saints and sinners and one general Judgment (Notes, 1 Cor. 15. 23, 24; Matt. 25. 31–46; Sermons, Vol. I, pp. 126ff.). The premillennial idea of the kingdom is condemned by his comment on Acts 1. 6: "They still seemed to dream of an outward, temporal kingdom, in which the Jews should have dominion over all nations."

A final appeal is made to Wesley's exegesis of Rev. 20. Wesley's curious theory here is probably shared by no one to-day, but whatever may be thought of it, it is certainly not premillennial. Following Bengel, he holds that there are two millennia. During the first thousand years Satan is bound and the church flourishes; during the second thousand years the saints begin to reign with Christ in heaven, but on earth Satan is loosed and evil prevails. But these events are all in the spiritual world

and all invisible to men, and it is *after* these two millennia that Christ's advent occurs. "He (Satan) will be bound; when he is loosed again the martyrs will live and reign with Christ. Then follow his coming in glory, the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem." These last named concern the eternal worlds. See Notes on Rev. 20. 3–5; 21. 1. This is Bengel's teaching, a mild and spiritualized millennialism, but certainly not premillennial, despite repeated assertions. Bengel holds to a thousand years in which Satan will be bound, a second thousand in which "the martyrs live and reign, not on earth but with Christ; then the coming of Christ in glory at length takes place at the last day; then, next, there is the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem." An intermediate rule of Christ on earth with his saints following upon his advent is definitely excluded by both.

But the opposition between Wesleyanism and premillennialism runs far deeper than these details of doctrine. It is the opposition between Methodism and Calvinism. Augustinian Calvinism does not imply premillennialism, and Augustine and Calvin were its avowed opponents, but premillennialism does involve Calvinism, and that of an extreme type. Calvinism's essential character appeared in its doctrine of God, in that one-sided emphasis upon the divine sovereignty which endangered alike the highest conception of character and the moral-spiritual nature of his dealings with men. Its motive was creditable: to assert God's sovereignty and salvation by divine grace alone. Its conclusions were less so, for on God's side it led everything back to the authority of power and not that of character, while the extreme doctrine of total depravity and the denial of moral free-

dom made man in effect the passive object upon which omnipotence exercised its will. The story of human life and destiny became thus, in those that were lost as in those that were saved, simply the inevitable carrying out in time of the decrees of the Absolute. The final appeal was not to character but authority, the final method was not ethical and free but that of power and thus of necessity.

Premillennialism does not deal primarily with the matter of the individual salvation about which the older controversy raged. It rests, however, upon the same fundamental conception of God and his method, simply applying these to world history and the coming of the kingdom. There is the same appeal to sovereignty in disregard of moral and rational considerations. World history, as premillennialism sees it, is a rigid scheme which a sovereign power has predetermined just as in the old Jewish apocalypticism. God might bring in the new age sooner, but he has not so determined. Satan rules in this age by the will of that same power which is later to dethrone him. "It is given unto Satan to triumph in the present dispensation," writes Brookes, one of the older premillennial authorities, and it is interesting to note that he concludes from this, as the event has proved quite correctly, that "the wretched heresy of womanism, the last form of error and the latest phase of infidelity, will certainly win the day" (The Lord Cometh, pp. 316, 317). A limited number of people are to be saved in this age before the second advent; that too, the same author points out, is purely a decision of divine authority (pp. 310, 311). And this is the reason why the world is not to be saved in this dispensation.

With this predetermination of the course of events by divine authority, there goes naturally the appeal to divine power or, rather, to divine force as alone decisive. As sovereign authority decides, so sheer power executes. Nothing is left to the contingency of human choice or human service. It is irresistible grace at work in the larger field. Hence these writers scoff at the idea of the kingdom being brought in "by man's puny efforts," and declare that when it comes it will be a miraculous deed of God. The sovereign will which has predetermined the course of events brings each to pass in turn by irresistible power.

In the effort to win larger groups the modern undenominational Adventism makes little reference to this Calvinistic basis. Older leaders, like A. J. Gordon and J. H. Brookes, were much more outspoken. The situation is clearly stated by Professor S. H. Kellogg, formerly of Allegheny Seminary, and one of the men who issued the call for the first "prophetic conference." Writing of that conference, he points out that while eighty-eight per cent were Augustinians, only five per cent of those who indorsed the call were Methodists. "Premillennialism," he declares, "presupposes an anthropology essentially Augustinian." Redemption is not brought about by "the cooperation of man with the work of the Holy Ghost in the use of existing material, moral, and spiritual agencies." "Premillennialists constantly insist that the present dispensation is strictly elective. They all maintain that the immediate object of the present dispensation is not the salvation of the world or the race, but only the salvation of an election out of the world ... So much stress is laid by premillennialists upon

conceptions of this kind, that it is difficult to see how any but an Augustinian can really accept the system." Premillennialism "refers the salvation of men out of the present age to the electing purpose of God. It seems to be of necessity involved, moreover, that this election must be sovereign and absolute" (Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. XLV).

Mr Wesley's teaching on the points involved needs no detailed statement. He emphasized as strongly as any man the thought of salvation by grace alone. He had as high a conception as any of the power of God and his sovereignty, but he saw that the sovereignty that God desired was a moral sovereignty, resting upon the free love and loyalty of his children. He magnified the power of God, but it was the power of God's Spirit exercised through the truth and in the realm of freedom, not as a coercive force. Religion thus became for him a personal relation moving in the realm of moral forces. And against the rigid determination of the Calvinistic system, he proclaimed God's will for the salvation of all men, a will whose defeat could have only one source, the refusal of man. But enough has been said to make clear Mr. Wesley's fundamental difference of standpoint from modern premillennialism, and why this has found so little entrance among Methodists.

II. A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE brief bibliography here appended has been prepared with the needs of the average pastor and general student in mind.

REPRESENTATIVE WRITINGS OF MODERN PREMILLENNIALISM

The reports of the so-called prophetic conferences are perhaps the best source for the modern movement. The titles are given here with the place and date of the conference.

Premillennial Essays (New York, 1878).
Prophetic Studies (Chicago, 1886).
The Coming and Kingdom of Christ (Chicago, 1914).
Light on Prophecy (Philadelphia, 1918). This last is of least value.

Of the older books may be mentioned:
J. H. Brookes. The Lord Cometh (1876).
Nathanael West. The Thousand Years in Both Testaments (1880).
J. A. Seiss. The Last Times (1856).
H. Grattan Guinness. The Approaching End of the Ages. Illustrates the now generally discredited and abandoned effort at calculation of the end of the age.
S. H. Kellogg. Premillennialism. Vol. XLV, Bibliotheca Sacra.

The following are representative among the more recent publications:
W. E. Blackstone. Jesus Is Coming. First published in 1878, but with recent editions. Very widely circulated.
J. F. Silver. The Lord's Return. These two show very much less ability than the older works mentioned above, but are valuable for reference.
A. C. Gaebelein. The Harmony of the Prophetic Word.
J. M. Gray. A Text Book on Prophecy. Prophecy and the Lord's Return.
R. A. Torrey. The Return of the Lord Jesus.
I. M. Haldeman. The Coming of Christ; Ten Sermons on the Second Coming.

Criticism of Premillennialism

David Brown. The Second Advent (second edition, 1849).
A thorough discussion and still valuable, especially as reporting the opinions of earlier premillennialists.
H. C. Sheldon. Studies in Recent Adventism. Good, but very brief.
George P. Eckman. When Christ Comes Again. Practical and helpful discussions of a popular character.
James H. Snowden. The Coming of the Lord. A somewhat fuller exposition of premillennialism and perhaps the best of the recent criticisms.
Shailer Mathews. Will Christ Come Again? (pamphlet).

Here might be mentioned also Frank Ballard, Why Not Russellism?; and Daniel Steele, A Substitute for Holiness (with special reference to the Plymouth Brethren).

Historical and Critical Works

The following list includes works bearing not only upon premillennialism and its history, but upon apocalypticism in Judaism and early Christianity.

Frank C. Porter. Messages of the Apocalyptic Writers. Perhaps the best brief introduction to apocalypticism and the books of Daniel and Revelation.

R. H. Charles. Eschatology, Hebrew. Jewish, and Christian; also edition of Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (in two large volumes).

M. S. Terry. Biblical Apocalyptics.

W. Bousset. Die Religion des Judentums; Die Offenbarung Johannis.

E. F. Scott. The Kingdom and the Messiah.

E. W. Winstanley. Jesus and the Future

Shailer Mathews. The Messianic Hope in the New Testament.

S. D. F. Salmond. The Christian Doctrine of Immortality.

H. A. A. Kennedy. St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things.

Shirley J. Case. The Millennial Hope. A valuable historical review with criticism of modern premillennialism.

In addition to Porter and Bousset mentioned above, the following may be commended on Revelation: C. A. Scott. The Book of Revelation (in New Century Bible); J. Moffatt, Expositor's Greek Testament, V.

Some of the best material is to be found in special articles: A Harnack. "Millennium," in Encycopædia Britannica; W. A. Brown. "Millennium," Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible; R. H. Charles. "Eschatology of the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic Literature," in the same; W. Fairweather. "Development of Doctrine in the Apocryphal Period," in the same; C. A. Briggs, "Origin and History of Premillennialism," Lutheran Quarterly, IX.

Since writing the above, there have appeared two very valuable works, the former being specially full in its treatment of earlier apocalypticism: I. T. Beckwith. The Apocalypse of John; S. J. Case. The Revelation of John.

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Rall, Harris Franklin, 1870-
Modern premillennialism and the Christian hope, by Harris Franklin Rall. New York, Cincinnati, The Abingdon press [c1920]
255 p. 20 cm.
"Most of the discussions of premillennialism, forming part II, appeared in the last three issues of the Biblical world for 1919." --p. 20.
"A selected bibliography": p. 253-255.
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